

SEED – Hub

Social Entrepreneurship Education
and Development Hub



SEED-Hub

ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEMS IN THE AUSTRIA-SLOVAKIA CROSS-BORDER REGION AND IDENTIFICATION OF BEST CASES

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1 Executive Summary

This document represents one of the outputs of the Austrian-Slovak cross border Interreg project (the 2nd monitoring period July - December 2021) focused on strengthening the business sustainability of social economy actors in the border regions. It results from the three core activities designed and realised by partners within the Social Entrepreneurship Education and Development Hub (SEED Hub):

1. Mapping
2. Education
3. Networking

The aim of the SEED Hub project is to develop long-term partnerships between social enterprises and entrepreneurs who carry out activities with positive impact on society in the border regions of both countries, ie. Slovak Republic and Austria, face similar challenges and can benefit from knowledge transfer. In addition, the SEED Hub project contributes to strengthening cross-border institutional cooperation by mobilizing social economy partners from the public sphere.

Document is divided into 2 main parts:

1. Analysis of the social economy ecosystems / areas - 5 specific topics with 5 cross-cutting common issues (listed in the chapter on Methodology)
2. Description of 5 best cases found in each country.

There were many lessons learned during the mapping of and interviewing with the social economy entities. We would like to stress at least the following:

Capacity building within the social economy in all areas needs to continue. Many social entrepreneurs lack relevant skills and capacities to successfully introduce their ideas to the market, such as skills to define the social issue, find the solution, define the value of the service to society, “mark it with a price”, do sustainable business modeling and financial planning and present all this to all stakeholders including state and financial institutions have to be further developed. Capacity building should begin with a change in the in/formal education system for aspiring social entrepreneurs so that they are able to acquire these much-needed skills through frontal and peer learning before starting their journey of social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurs also need to learn how to fight barriers to financial sustainability. Strong dependence of social issues solvers / NGO / social enterprises on grant schemes should be replaced by use of hybrid financing (refundable and non-refundable). There is a need to diversify funding sources and, for instance, gradually replace the use of grant funding for solvers of social problems with innovative financial instruments such as Social Impact Bonds, respectively results-oriented contracting, or quasi-equity and mezzanine from ethical investors / banks. They better and economically sustainably aim at the effective use of financial and human capacities to address challenges in the long term perspective.

Impact measurement is one way of communicating the value the enterprise brings to a society. Financial institutions and other sources of capital contributions are more willing to

finance them due to clearly defined and measured impact. Inadequate impact measurement is often resulting from a lack of available data or missing data mining and management capacities can be overtaken by closer cooperation with other (academic) institutions well-versed in this field.

Networking should be fostered in a broader sense between social entrepreneurs and enterprises; not only to learn from each other and overcome gaps in skills and capacities but also to build up a “critical mass” needed for successful lobbying towards policy-makers or funding bodies. The needs and interests of stakeholders within the social economy should be better articulated in both countries with a fragmented ecosystem.

In today’s ever-more complicated economy, some problems are so “wicked” - in the sense of consisting of several interrelated social-economic-environmental issues - that addressing them requires long-term strategy building taking into account all these aspects. “Commercial” organizations primarily focusing on profit or the third sector - often dealing only with societal issues and perceived as “non-commercial” - are usually not capable of initiating a systemic change where disruptive ideas are fostered to overcome existing economic models and business practices.

Socially or socially beneficial, responsible or impact business pushes these boundaries. It is about profit as well as positive social impact. This is where we see the future of the economy and sustainability in solving the issues of a society. Empathy and a sensitive approach in solving societal issues at all levels of private and state sectors in a sustainable manner (also financially) are crucial.

Therefore we believe that the social economy is the future of the economy.

2 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to identify 3 to 5 priority areas that apply to both the Slovak and Austrian programme regions and could benefit from cross-border capacity building in the area of social innovation.

3 Methodology

Based on the mapping phase of the project (including various public and private entities of Bratislava city, Bratislava region, Trnava region, Vienna city, Burgenland region, Lower Austria region), study of PHSR (programme of social and economy development) of Bratislava and Trnava regions, the relevant reports on Austria and Slovakia within the study „Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe“, as well as the practical experiences from the professional activities of the partnership, in particular Sociálni inovátori (SI), Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI) and the University of Applied Sciences of Burgenland (FHB) we have grouped the most pressing challenges of social economy within these regions into 5 main social economy areas:

- 1. Social services**
- 2. Social inclusion**
- 3. Education**
- 4. Creative and Cultural Industry**
- 5. Food Industry**

Common or cross-cutting challenges for the above mentioned topics were identified:

- 1. Financing issues connected with social enterprises**
- 2. Networking and interest representation of social enterprises**
- 3. Data mining, lack of data and the ability work with them**
- 4. Lack of human capacities in social economy**
- 5. Strategy-building and systemic change initiation**

Each area is structured as:

- Problem definition
- Environment
- Entities interviewed
- Potential for cross border solutions for Austria and Slovakia

The content is not exhaustive and due to the time limits of the project does not include all players in selected ecosystems. It selects only some of them. Ten of them are described in the final part as the best examples to present.

Best case practices (5) are summarized at the end of the document. Each best case is showed from these points of view:

- Problem

- Objective
- Impact
- Business model and Development plan / Future

4 Social Services

4.1 Definition of the Priority Area

As social services we understand services to support various vulnerable groups of people, irrespective of age factors, such as senior people, children and unaccompanied minor refugees (UMF, relevant in Austria) and persons with different types of disabilities (health factor).

4.2 Problem Definition

Based on multiple interviews conducted throughout our work in the sector of social economy as well as while mapping and auditing the market players active in the area of social care in Slovakia and Austria, we summarize the problem of this area as follows (indicating which problems pertain to which country and, where possible, in case of related problems, highlighting the situation in the other country):

4.2.1 Working conditions are demotivating (Slovakia)

- a. Social care workers are highly underpaid.
- b. Well-being at work and worker's benefits of caregivers are in majority of cases neglected.
- c. There is a drain of social care workers from Slovakia (and other Eastern countries) to Austria due to higher salary opportunities, even though higher salary is the only advantage of working abroad. Well-being at work and any sort of worker's benefits are still on a very low level or non-existent even abroad. Here the two countries are at the opposite end of the migration flow, highlighting the still existing differences in quality of life and labour market opportunities.
- d. There is a high potential for burn-out syndrome among employees in social care services.

4.2.2 There is a lack of educated personnel & management (Slovakia)

- a. Majority of current personnel in social care centres (e.g. DSS - domov sociálnych služieb) are under-educated for the job.
- b. There is a lack of quality educational opportunities for students before reaching working age (i.e. lack of quality educational opportunities related to real-life work at high schools as well as higher levels of education).
- c. Once at work, social care workers usually do not have enough free time and financial resources to educate themselves alongside their jobs.

- d. Currently, in some cases managers of social care centres do not come from the background of social services. They come with managerial skills but lack understanding of the sphere and its needs.
- e. Personnel with a background in social services lack managerial education and skills to lead social care centres efficiently and sustainably.

4.2.3 Methods of financing social services employed by public institutions are ineffective and the volume of payment & investment into the sector is insufficient (Slovakia)

- a. Payments on operations of social care centres go from public institutions (Ministry of Labour, regional governments, municipalities) to the centres, instead of going to clients, who would be able to use the funds according to their needs and pay to a preferred social care centre. Payments to clients would contribute to higher quality of services provided, since a client, when given the choice, will choose the higher quality service fitting his/her needs, that is available on the market. In the current set-up however, after some time on waiting lists, clients end up in the centre, which has space available for them.
- b. Payments from the state to family members who take care of their senior parent or a handicapped family member are at an unsatisfactory level. Caregiving is often a full-time job, not leaving time for the care-giving family member to be regularly employed elsewhere, earning a living and paying his/her insurance. Informal (family) carers also make up a vulnerable group in Austria to whom more support should be provided.
- c. If a patient is classified as both senior and ill (needs social and health care service both at once), social care centres receive payments from only one public source - either for a senior patient from the Ministry of Labour or for an ill patient from the Ministry of Health. There is no space to combine two or more public sources when taking care of one patient. This results in an inadequate payment for the amount of care that a senior and ill patient requires. Most senior patients are also ill, thus centres are generally underfinanced, also due to this system flaw.
- d. Due to an overall low payment volume from public institutions to social care centres, the centres have a lack of employees for the amount of clients. This results in low-quality service, a high risk environment for patients and a stressful working environment for employees. At the same time there are low funds to do major investment on the facility and its equipment.
- e. Investment from the public institutions towards education within the sphere is low, resulting in undereducated staff and managers.

4.2.4 Social care centres as well as governments are not taking advantage of modern technologies (Slovakia)

- a. There are various types of software available on the market that help improve work environment, productivity of personnel, collect data and decrease human error. Social care centres in Slovakia are mostly not implementing these technologies in practice. Most processes are run manually. In Austria, the problem does not concern the lack of modern software and other technologies but rather a need for further

training for both staff and management in the field of digitalisation and other special know-how.

- b. Municipalities, regions and the state government lack reliable data to analyze the needs of the sector and make responsible and competent decisions.

4.2.5 The demand for social services is not satisfied (Slovakia)

- a. Overall there are not enough social care institutions in Slovakia as well as there are not enough personnel and managers to run and operate these centres.
- b. The demand for good value (sufficient quality for adequate price) social care in Slovakia is dissatisfied.
- c. Some types of social care establishments are very rare in Slovakia - e.g. assisted housing for seniors, mobile care services providers are rather private entities (major part of the price for the service is paid by clients compared to Austria where $\frac{3}{4}$ is paid by public institutions).

4.2.6 There is a need for a higher level of vertical and horizontal integration in the care system (Austria)

- a. The Austrian system has a quite decentralised governance structure
- b. The decentralisation leads to coordination problems between health and social care facilities, manifesting in inadequate resource allocation and task distribution and measure division
- c. Not unlike Slovakia, fragmentation between social and health care work is observed – in service delivery and financing terms

4.2.7 Increasing dependence on carers coming from Eastern European countries

- a. Increasing dependence on carers coming from Eastern European countries, in particular Slovakia (as well as Hungary and Romania) led to a „dual“ labour market of formal and informal (personal) care services (Austria)
- b. Informal carers are a ‚grey‘ area within the social care sector in Austria where there is a vast difference in regulated paid care work and unpaid care work mostly carried out by female carers who dominantly come from other countries (migrants), irrespective of their place of service (temporary personal or facility)
- c. The whole model of using foreign social care workers in Austria was further challenged by the COVID-19 crisis when travel restrictions and other regulatory measures did not allow these persons to enter the country. For instance, two of the relevant regions of the analysis (Burgenland, Lower Austria) had to fly in live-in carers from Eastern European countries to replace the personal carers who were not able to work more shifts. Inequities and unfairness of the system was exposed

4.2.8 Informal carers operate in a “grey” area with inadequate support system and lack of rights (Austria)

- a. Existing gaps in social care services are mitigated by families and informal carers among whom – as mentioned at problem 7 – a significant proportion is women stemming from foreign (Eastern European) countries. They are in a multiply disadvantaged position since, in addition to cultural and language differences, they

lack labour rights and social protection, as well as must perform often under precarious job conditions

- b. The disadvantaged situation of informal carers was further exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic when they had to face extra physical and mental stress, often without being able to rely on their usual support system (network of people in similar situation or family) during lockdown

It is possible to summarize the *PROBLEM DEFINITION* of the social service sector into two far-reaching topics:

- A. **Human capacities problem** (including undereducation of staff and management, underpayment, bad working environment and resulting in human capital flight causing different but interrelated personal, socio-economic and labour market issues in both countries, stress and burnout)
- B. **Financing problem** (there is a systemic low investment into social care and payments for operations are unsatisfactory, demand for social care is not satisfied, there is a lack of education opportunities and the sector does not take advantage of modern technologies, vertical and horizontal fragmentation between social and health care work)

4.3 Environment

The social services in Slovakia are meant as a service of state to its inhabitants. Generally, it is understood that the social service provider is a facility established by a public or private entity, its clients are people, however the service is mostly paid by the state. In some private facilities, the price of the service is paid from two sources - public institutions (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Regional Municipality) and funds from clients.

The regional governments of Bratislava and Trnava regions have included accessible social care in their “priority areas” when it comes to their strategy in their programme for economic and social development (“programme hospodárskeho a sociálneho rozvoja - PHSR”).

Social care centres in Slovakia are currently being financed in two main ways:

a. From public sources:

Public social care providers or centres are financed and run by the state, regions or municipalities. Due to being publicly financed, these institutions are more capable of receiving EU funds, which is discriminative against private social care providers.

b. From private or private / public sources:

Private social care centres are usually run by an NGO or an active individual coming from the social care or healthcare background. They receive their financing from multiple sources, while fundraising is a part of their work. Among the funding sources are most often budgets of municipalities and regional governments. Payments from municipalities and regions are calculated based on the expenses of

public social care providers, which are often lower than the true expenses of *private social care providers*. In the majority of cases there is also a need for direct payments from clients or their family members to *private social care centres*.

Useful source entities providing social services: [Central register of social services providers](#)

The social services in Austria are in the primary responsibility of the federal states, local and municipal authorities therefore regional differences exist in both the quality and quantity of services and organisational delivery (taking into account also the population and urban-rural divide between the capital city Vienna and the other federal states).

Regional or lower-level territorial authorities operate and maintain some of the social services while other such services have been outsourced to non-profit organisations, associations or private (for-profit) service providers. In total, the public sector has a predominant role in service provision and delivery in most of the services discussed in this chapter, such as elderly care, childcare or taking care of persons with special needs or disadvantages. Depending on the nature of the care and the region(s) involved, providers can include large organisations with traditional backgrounds (such as cooperatives, church-related organisations, welfare organisations) and smaller commercial and non-commercial entities.

Financing is provided by the public sector and subsidies, whereas income from the employment areas offered by the companies and donations are rather negligible. Due to the high proportion of skilled workers, the remuneration of the employees accounts for the largest part of the operating costs. Particular attention is paid to staff training, digitalisation and sustainable investments in mobility.

The activities of the social enterprises are oriented towards legal requirements (e.g. risk to the welfare of children) and the individual abilities, interests and needs of the target groups. Based on our Austrian interview results and further landscape mapping, the following SDGs are particularly affected by social service providers:

SDG 1 No poverty

SDG 2 No hunger

SDG 3 Health and well-being

SDG 4 Quality education

SDG 5 Gender equality

SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation

SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth

SDG 10 Less inequality

4.4 Interviews

Based on the interviews that we have conducted in the mapping and auditing process of SEED-Hub we would like to highlight the following actors that, with their activities, stand out in the sphere of social services in Slovakia.

“Asociácia odborných pracovníkov sociálnych služieb” (AOPSS), translates as Association for Professionals in Social Services

AOPSS connects caregivers, nurses, middle and high level managers, directors as well as educators working in social services. It was created to aid social service professionals in their professional development and in development of the sector as a whole. It is one of the founders of the Academy which implements lifelong learning programmes that can enable social workers to obtain a partial qualification, a full qualification or to supplement, renew, extend or deepen a qualification acquired in school education. In addition to that, the students may study the MBA (Master of Business Administration) programme which is a master's degree programme in vocational education, internationally recognized degree in management education, in 2 fields - Management of social services and Controlling and counseling in social services. Working conditions are risky and work is physically and psychologically demanding. AOPSS is a tool for its members to work together and stress the need for increasing the quality of their working environment and simultaneously the quality of life of their clients. (<https://aopss.sk/>)

Tabita

Tabita is one of the founding organizations of the above-mentioned Academy and it specializes in increasing the quality of services that social care institutions provide to their clients. Tabita is focusing on systematically improving the quality of social services. Its employees are advisors and auditors of managerial quality and of implementation of legal norms, they all have a background from social services so they understand practical problems of social service providers in depth. Tabita develops and validates processes and methodologies used in social services and suggests changes to those, based on both legislation and experience of their clients in practice. The goal of the company is safe social services at high quality available for all. (tabita.sk/)

Navzájom lepší

The non-profit organization based its new project on the need to take care of workers at social service providers. By performing the service and its complexity in day-to-day provision, encountering crisis situations and other threatening factors, the provider loses motivation and is endangered by the burnout syndrome. Over time, the work becomes a burden and the provider loses active participation in the provision of the service. The organization is preparing a pilot project in which 500 employees working in social services facilities within the Trnava region will be retrained. Participants will be trained in mental

and physical health and thus receive support in the prevention of burnout. It includes specific techniques and methods that they can use in life. Subsequently, the NGO plans to implement this pilot within a sustainable social enterprise business model. At the same time, it manages the social service facility with 120 clients provided with accommodation service and almost 60 clients with an ambulant form of service in cooperation with the Trnava region as a main subcontractor. (navzajomlepsi.sk)

Andreas

andreas.sk

Andreas Autism centre n.o. is a non-governmental organization with a nationwide scope, for the purpose of providing public benefit services in the field of social assistance and humanitarian care exclusively for the population with autistic syndrome. Centrum provides its services by providing social prevention, social counseling, education in a special primary school with a kindergarten and organizes training activities for professionals. Their ambition is to build a 24-hour/7-day centre providing social care (including accommodation) for people with autism. There is only one such facility in the Trenčín region called Drahuškovo (drahuskovo.sk/domov/). The Trnava region plans to build one in Dobrá Voda.

Caresee

Caresee is an administrative, managerial and educational software for social service centres that improves the quality and safety of their services. The software provides workers and managers with complex information about their clients as well as related administrative requirements, standards and procedures relevant for their work. Caresee was created by social care professionals with decades of experience in the field as a reaction to their experience during hundreds of hours of auditing social care centres and helping them in countless crisis situations. (caresee.sk/)

“IG24: Interessengemeinschaft der 24-Stunden-Betreuer*innen”, translates as IG24: the interest group of 24-hour caregivers

Simona Ďurišová is a caregiver and an activist from Slovakia fighting for foreign live-in caregivers rights in Austria under her organization IG24. IG24 is a grassroots organization pointing out a structural problem present in Austria. Currently, foreign live-in caregivers support the Austrian care system, however they lack access to the social support system and effective labour rights. This is due to the fact that foreign live-in caregivers are mostly involuntarily self-employed. Along with better working conditions, the organization aims to achieve a structural change that would mean employment of live-in caregivers by the state or cooperatives. IG24 is doing so by advocacy and lobbying. Another hole in the system that IG24 fills is a community and consultancy for foreign, self-employed, live-in caregivers, where they can find support for their work and life abroad in their own language. The organization also provides access to training, assistance and support in crises. In 2021 the

organization was rewarded by Social Marie - Prize for Social Innovation. (sozialmarie.org/sk/projects/8537)

Tenenet

The civic association Tenenet is active in both *social care* and *social inclusion*. When talking about their activities within *social care*, Tenenet is a well-known and well-established educator and counselor when it comes to administration, processes and methodologies at social service institutions/centres in Slovakia. The mission of the civic association is to provide social assistance and humanitarian care, specifically with a focus on basic and specialized social counseling, which it provides on an ambulance and field work basis. It is active in supporting the employment of vulnerable groups. It has also set up its own social enterprise and provides advice on setting up registered social enterprises to other organizations. It has built a wide network of counselors and therapists in the field of social and health care. (tenenet.sk/)

Socio

Tenenet, together with a software development company Everlution s.r.o., have co-developed Socio - a complex platform for mobile social work. Main functions of Socio are: complex documentation of cases/clients, useful statistics and methodology tools which work toward elimination of human error at social work and a simple administrative interface for effective management. The developer team at Socio is working with system users to continuously improve system features to satisfy changes in legislation or internal changes at the institutions using Socio. (socio.sk/)

Low-capacity social care and daily care centre by Prof. MUDr. Mariana Mrázová, PhD. MHA

Mariana Mrázová is a medical practitioner, professor and a public health professional, who personally feels the need to build a low-capacity social and daily care centre focused on people with autism, due to a lack of such in Slovakia. The inadequacy of capacities in quality social care in Slovakia has affected Mariana to an extent that she has taken it under her leadership to find a suitable space and a group of professionals to build what is missing. This project is a reaction to the deficient state social care in Slovakia currently finds itself in.

Aptet

Aptet is based outside of the SEED-Hub programme region, in the city of Levice, self-governing region Nitra. However, we consider them an interesting actor with an overflowing impact to the programme regions (self-governing regions of Bratislava and Trnava), that deserves at least a brief introduction. Aptet is active in integration and employment of the senior population (or other disadvantaged groups) as well as in

organizing support groups for people taking care of senior or disadvantaged family members. The organization plans on expanding their activities within both social care and social inclusion. (aptet.sk/)

Silver Living

Silver Living provides senior citizens with privately financed housing (assisted living) options in Vienna and Graz. Their focus lies in assisted and sheltered living (40% of their portfolio) but it is complemented by other service property models such as generational living. Silver Living's concrete services include project development (search for appropriate houses, market analysis, concept development and planning, local building supervision), marketing and rental services (where the company serves as an intermediary body between regional authorities, investors and people looking for houses), operational management (co-operation with care service providers and other business entities), investment management.

Silver Living primarily aims to create a 'comfortable' environment for the senior residents within their houses but in the broader sense they intend to foster a constant political debate on the topic of old age in Austria and strive for a societal change altering basic attitudes towards old age. (silver-living.com/)

Alterslust

Alterslust is the only Austrian private organisation involved in supporting elderly people in staying active within their rural communities (villages) by providing social services (care, assistance and community involvement). Alterslust has three main strands of activities: a personal coaching service for elderly, the Vitale Gemeinde programme which consists of a 5-stage process of connecting all generations through various activities within a rural community and the Community Health Nurse programme which is an Austrian platform for caregivers filling in care 'gaps' between hospital and home care services not fulfilled by official providers. (alterslust.at/)

SOS Kinderdorf in Burgenland Einrichtungen im Burgenland| SOS-Kinderdorf

The SOS Kinderdorf, which has existed in Burgenland since 1960, offers a wide range of educational services and programmes, especially for minors whose well-being is not guaranteed in their family of origin. Care and support is provided in the form of SOS Kinderdorf family services, which enable long-term bonding and relationship building, residential groups, crisis residential groups and residential groups for unaccompanied minor refugees. Parent-child living is offered in the form of inpatient support and care for families for a period of a few weeks up to two years, as well as mobile and outpatient assistance for families. Formerly cared-for children receive counselling and support as young adults, for example in difficult life situations. The SOS Kinderdorf campaigns nationally and internationally for the observance and implementation of children's rights. (sos-kinderdorf.at/)

Sozialtherapeutische Wohngemeinschaft Sozialtherapeutische Wohngemeinschaft Pronegg

The residential community is run by Katrin and Robert Krammer, the second generation, and was founded in 1980. A multi-professional team provides long-term care for children who have been exposed to prolonged and complex traumatisation and accompanies the children and adolescents from infancy to adulthood and beyond. A network of cooperation partners, such as child and adolescent psychiatrists, is available for support. Fifteen children and adolescents between the ages of four and 18 can be cared for in the residential community. Another four adolescents or young adults, at the earliest from the age of 16, are individually cared for daily in the intensively supervised living in the house across the street from the shared flat until they complete their education. In addition, the WG provides four starter flats for young adults at no extra cost. The care is based on individual needs, and it is possible to dock onto the WG life at any time. Within the framework of aftercare, young adults are offered selective support for crisis intervention. (Sozialtherapeutische Wohngemeinschaft Pronegg, wg-pronegg.at)

WG Fühl Dich wohl

The residential community is run as an association by the Herowitsch-Trinkl couple. It looks after severely traumatised children and adolescents who have been taken away from their families of origin. The aim is to improve their chances in life and to offer constancy in relationships and freedom from violence in the lives of the minors. Methods used are, for example, biographical work, working through the causes or experiential education, and psychotherapy is provided. The centre employs 15 staff members, mainly qualified special needs teachers. (marz.gv.at/gesundheit-und-soziales/fuehl-dich-wohl)

Gesundheitsforum Burgenland Start

The Gesundheitsforum Burgenland association is a non-profit, non-partisan service provider and was founded in 1976. Currently, the association offers about 40 people with mental illnesses a place to live in the residential house as well as a continuous daily structure. This can be visited by outpatient clients from Monday to Friday. In supervised flats, clients are prepared for their independence in everyday life. For example, training is offered in the areas of social skills, self-esteem and self-confidence, stress management and the ability to deal with conflict and criticism. The main topics in the residential home include social issues, working, personal hygiene, organisation and support in the daily structure or with visits to the doctor, room hygiene and improving one's own abilities and resources. The multi-professional care team consists of 20 staff members, psychologists, qualified pedagogues for the disabled, specialised social workers and social pedagogues. (gesundheitsforum-burgenland.at)

NachbarschaftsHILFE PLUS START - NachbarschaftsHILFE PLUS – wir helfen kostenfrei und verlässlich

The aim of NachbarschaftsHILFE PLUS is to enable mainly older people to lead an independent life with a high quality of life, social participation, in their own home, in familiar surroundings, through mutual help. This is made possible through driving and accompanying services, shopping and medication services, (telephone) visiting services, walking services, childcare and information on social issues. The organisation is carried out by full-time staff, the neighborhood helps itself by volunteers. The non-partisan social project is financed by the participating municipalities, by subsidies from the state and the federal government, by partners and in the form of donations. (nachbarschaftshilfeplus.at/)

4.5 Potential cross-border solutions for Slovakia and Austria

4.5.1 Problem 1: Working conditions are demotivating (Slovakia)

Solution: One recommendation towards the systematic undervaluation and underpayment of staff and management in social services has been presented by **Eva Schwarz** at the first SEED-Hub Social Business Forum (carried out in September 2021), saying that caregivers should be employed by the state in the same way as other workers providing the service for a society, such as the members of the police or other key services provided by state. This statement has resonated with many participants of the forum as this form of employment would seem adequate for the workload and psychological as well as physical load that caretaking requires.

The grassroots organization **IG24** supports this recommendation by advocating that caregivers should be employed by the state or cooperatives and have access to employee benefits, paid holiday as well as social and health insurance.

Caregivers being employed by the government is not a far-fetched idea, as we have seen at the first Social Business Forum. A solution provided by pfllegeserviceburgenland.at and presented by **Klaudia Friedl** that has already been implemented in Burgenland engages family members to take care of their seniors, while the regional government employs them to do so. Caregivers receive a salary based on how demanding their case of caregiving is. There is an existing hope that this type of engagement of family members into caregiving could motivate some to proceed in this type of work also with people outside of their family and become professional caregivers.

Pfllegeservice Burgenland GmbH

The employment models of the company bring advantages above all to those people who are already looking after relatives in need of care with care allowance level 3 or higher and are therefore not gainfully employed, but also not yet retired. Its concept provides family caregivers the following advantages:

- Employment as an employee at a state company
- Full social security protection

- Contribution of periods for the pension
- A replacement worker in the event of illness if requested
- Entitlement to vacation leave
- Free basic training
- Basis for new career opportunities

It also needs to be taken care of by social workers. The organization **Navzájom lepší** works on the model of rehabilitation services to minimize the losses of motivation and danger of burnout syndrome.

4.5.2 Problem 2: There is a lack of educated personnel & management (Slovakia)

Solution: AVVSS with its MBA programmes, educational content and methodologies and connection to practice offer a solution to the problem of undereducated personnel and management in social care. However, the remaining obstacle here is financing and time which potential programme candidates must have. A still lacking connection that ought to be created for systemic improvement of this problem is the one between high quality educational content and methodologies, public high schools, social care institutions/centres and higher public education in social care. Its further ambition is to connect social service education systems and content developed to relevant high schools.

Caresee for social care centres and **Socio** for mobile care providers are great tools to educate the already employed personnel directly on the job. As the applications guide their users - caretakers in what are the correct procedures and how to fulfill their tasks correctly, they may serve as practical on-the-job educational tools. Similar service and product is provided by iscygnus.sk/cz in the Czech Republic.

Organizations such as **Tenenet** or **Tabita** are available to guide and advise managers of social care centres in order to build sustainable centres fulfilling legal requirements while offering high quality services and a good working environment.

4.5.3 Problem 3: Methods of financing social services employed by public institutions are ineffective and the volume of payment & investment into the sector is insufficient (Slovakia)

Solution: One potential solution could be directing payments going from the governmental institutions to clients instead of centres, leaving clients the right to choose the centre they desire. The requirements for this way of financing to function are setting restrictions, that the client may use the funding received from the state only for social care, not for unrelated purchases. The process of receiving and using funding needs to be user-friendly to work. Based on our interviews with social care providers, this way of financing is desirable by both - clients and centres. Leaving centres with motivation to perform well and attract patients. However more research and analysis on this solution needs to be done.

The volume of investment from the state targeted at an increase of social care capacities (human resources as well as facilities) is essential for creating an offer that would be able to satisfy the current needs of the market.

The state needs to invest more into salary payments of social care workers to attract people with higher skill levels for the job and to aid in preventing human capital flight and burnout. The salaries and employee benefits should better reflect the mental and physical difficulty and responsibility that the job brings. Regeneration centers for social workers are a great need.

Investment into public education in social services is essential if the level of quality should increase. Currently, the education for caregivers in Slovakia consists of a 220-hour training which is, according to AVVSS insufficient to train caregivers to do their job safely.

4.5.4 Problem 4: Social care centres as well as governments are not taking advantage of modern technologies (Slovakia)

Solution: Operational software for social care houses and mobile care increases precision and working capacity of caregivers and to decrease mistakes, each satisfying the needs of a different type of customer (social care homes and mobile caregivers respectively). As for governmental institutions, collection and subsequent analysis of real-life, high-quality data would be necessary to create an environment that nurtures innovation and quality growth in social care in Slovakia. Caresee and Socio collect data for further analysis.

4.5.5 Problem 5: The demand for social services is not satisfied (Slovakia)

Solution: Support or incentives for development initiatives to build assisted housing / living for seniors providing them with living solutions that offer not only security but encourage independence while living within a caring community. It is an alternative way of living for elderly people. About 10 years ago this concept was relatively rare in Austria (silver-living.com). Similar initiative is planned to be implemented by the Slovak development company Imagine Development in Malacky (the Bratislava region) (mayer.imaginehome.eu).

4.5.6 Problem 6: There is a need for a higher level of vertical and horizontal integration in the care system (Austria)

Solution: The Austrian health and social care system needs to take further steps to achieve a more integrated care delivery system through various measures, such as extending community-based services. In addition to top-down state-led initiatives, there is room for smaller bottom-up initiatives that might be upscaled further (after e.g. regional pilots). The fragmented social service delivery system could benefit for instance from community-based services such as community nursing, e.g. provided by Alterslust and its Community Health Nurse programme.

4.5.7 Problem 7: Increasing dependence on carers coming from Eastern European countries

Solution: Not to mention ethical questions, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the sustainability problems of the current Austrian social care and service system heavily dependent on unregulated (personal) carers with migrant backgrounds. This sector should be (better) regulated, quality standards should be improved and the professional status of such carers should be legally recognized and financially rewarded. Such a systematic

change is supported by organisations such as Volkshilfe which aims to gather relevant data on the situation of informal carers and strives to increase public awareness and solidarity around the issue. This topic was eagerly discussed at the first Social Business Forum in September 2021 and became a key focus of the advocacy activities of the IG24 organisation led by Simona Ďurišová (including the Problem 8 below).

4.5.8 Problem 8: Informal carers operate in a ,grey' area with inadequate support system and lack of rights (Austria)

Solution: Informal carers need to have reinforced support from by community care services, which should be strengthened from top-down (state, regional or municipal initiatives) but also strengthened by such programmes as the community nursing offered by Alterslust or the elderly care services provided by Nachbarschaftshilfe Plus.

4.5.9 Lessons learned from the first Social Business Forum focused on Social Services

In addition to the above solutions, organizations in Slovakia present on the first Social Business Forum showed interest in implementing some of the practices that are already working in Austria, namely:

- Longer, more in depth and publicly funded education programme for caregivers
- At-home caregiving, while the caregiver is employed by the state - as already implemented in Burgenland and presented at the forum by Klaudia Friedl (pflageserviceburgenland.at)
- Transferring the concept of assisted living for elderly citizens from Austria (silver-living.com)
- Funding social care in a way that clients receive a contribution from the state and choose their preferred provider or type of the service
- Searching for the model of financial sustainability of 24hours/7day stay centres for people with autism in Austria (see Andreas in “Best Cases” section)
- Educational exchange programme for Slovak social workers working in Austria (AVVSS - Mária Kovalová and IG24 - Simona Ďurišová) - potential for future cooperation between 2 organizations
- There is potential to learn from the neighboring country about the most effective ways of financing and supporting social services by public organizations.

The model used by Silver Living (see “Best Cases” section) in Styria where the state supports the refurbishment of housing and the funding of real estate development, while the residents get subsidies could be applicable in Slovakia with a different set of investors needed only to be focused on a small set of municipalities first where local support exists. Local partners such as Mrs Mária Kovalová from AVVSS have already been identified to further networking building.

Both Slovakia and Austria need to make work in social care more attractive for their nationals. This would include, for both countries, increasing salaries, offering at least regular employee benefits (caregivers would be regularly employed by the state or a cooperative that pay their health and social insurances and they would have the right to take a paid holiday).

5 Social Inclusion

5.1 Definition of the Priority Area

Social inclusion is a broad term in which for the purposes of this report we **include**:

- a. Housing
- b. Employment
- c. Community building

a.-c. are individual aspects of social inclusion but they all need to be fulfilled simultaneously for inclusion of more or less any group of people to work sustainably.

The **groups of people** that we believe social inclusion is relevant for:

1. Marginalized Roma communities in Slovakia
2. Immigrants living in Slovakia or Austria
3. Senior population
4. People with a disability
5. Homeless population
6. Children and youth in need

Each group has certain specificities when it comes to why exactly they struggle with aspects a - c each group thereby needs to be addressed with a specific solution taking into account their background as well as current situation and why they got to it.

It is essential that not only the public but also the private sector works on solving the challenges of social inclusion. For this reason in this section we will mention **impact incubators** and their importance for igniting successful social/impact enterprises that are to be part of the change that brings along social inclusion (among other things).

5.2 Problem Definition

The problems are specific for each group of people (1 - 6) in each aspect of social inclusion (a - c). We will pay more attention to the ones that we encountered most often during our mapping and auditing process of the social economy in Slovakia and Austria, and thereby we consider them to be more present and more relevant problems to solve.

5.2.1 Marginalized Roma Communities (MRCs) in Slovakia

a. Housing

The issue of housing for the Marginalized Roma Communities has been a pressing one for a very long time. MRCs live under the poverty line with at least suboptimal living conditions.

There are several reasons why many from the Roma population do not have access to proper housing, for instance:

- Generational poverty - It is extremely difficult for an individual born to a poor family to get out of the poverty cycle due to the environment in which she/he grows up and the long-lasting effects that background has on an individual.
- Racism from house owners - House owners may not want to rent or sell their houses to members of the Roma population.
- Low or impermanent income due to unemployment or seasonal employment

In Slovakia, there have been multiple efforts from the state that provided the MRCs with proper housing, however they seem to be unsustainable and ineffective.

Solving the issue of housing for the interested members of the Roma population is not possible without solving the reasons why these people do not have access to housing. To do that, other aspects of social inclusion need to be addressed as well and at the same time - education, employment and inclusion within a community.

b. Employment

Access to lasting employment is difficult for people from the MRCs due to:

- Generational poverty and its implications
- Lack of access to education
- Lack of work ethics
- Lack of work habits
- Lack of skill (hard skill or soft skill)
- Working at low-paid jobs with the costs it requires (transportation etc) in many cases simply does not pay off in comparison to social benefits received during unemployment
- Racism from the side of the employer, manager or colleagues

c. Community building

Usually the communities in which members of the Roma population in need live are very tight and important to them. It happens fairly often that if one individual from the Roma community living in poverty is given an opportunity for a life with a higher standard of living (in terms of housing and or employment), he/she might choose to go back to his/her community instead. Housing and/or employment does not automatically bring a community with it.

5.2.2 Immigrants living in Slovakia or Austria

We did not interview organizations that would be dealing with specifically the issues of immigrants living in Slovakia or Austria when it comes to housing, employment and/or community building. We are aware of some organizations dealing with these topics (in Slovakia e.g. [Mareena](#) or Volkshilfe in Austria), however within the scope of this project we

have prioritized organizations dealing with issues that are present in the regions at a larger scale.

5.2.3 Senior population in Slovakia or Austria

a. Housing

Most seniors in Slovakia live at home, often alone, many receive occasional visits from mobile caregivers. Some stay at social care centres. Social care centres are usually meant for people with a serious condition that need 24-hour, 7-day per week professional care. However, there is currently no solution available between staying at one's home or living in a social care centre. An "in-between" solution for those that are of a higher age, who can mostly take care of themselves and need only a little help with certain tasks or occasional medical help and could benefit from a community and social opportunities that some shared assisted housing projects abroad offer.

In Austria, there is a more dominant role of family, informal or live-in caregivers (in particular with regard to long-term care) but this service provided for elderly people is connected with the issue of the 'dual' labour market with underpaid and unregulated (female) service providers with a migration background (see Section „Social Services“).

b. Employment

Population over 50-years-old often struggles with employment at regular jobs due to various reasons, for example:

- Decreased learning capacity compared to younger population
- Decreased physical condition compared to younger population
- Discrimination by employers

c. Community building

It is a known fact that seniors of today feel lonely manytimes. Community is one of the tools to avoid loneliness. There are several possibilities that seniors have to interact with people outside of their immediate family/circle of friends. E.g. Bratislava city picked few [opportunities](#) for seniors or Trnava city has 8 daily senior centers creating conditions for hobby and cultural activities and for maintaining the physical and mental activity of its members (known as Kluby dôchodcov). The solutions provided by Alterslust (detailed in "Social Services" section) can be also understood as a community-building exercise for elderly people living in Austrian villages (rural communities).

5.2.4 People with a disability in Slovakia or Austria

a. Housing

Social service or care providers established for various types of clients. More in the part Social services above.

b. Employment

Finding employment for people with a disability is difficult because:

- employers do not believe that it would financially pay off
- employers, managers and teams do not know how to work with people with various disabilities
- often an intermediary is required for employment to take place (an organization that knows a specific form of disability, how to work with it and how to educate both, the organization that will become the employer and the person that will become an employee)

In Slovakia, through various employment supporting schemes there are companies ([shelter companies](#) or [registered social enterprises](#)) which are eligible to use funds from the EU to help them employ vulnerable groups of people. In Austria, work integration social enterprises (WISEs) as a special legal form of social businesses (labeled often as socio-economic enterprises - sozio-ökonomische Betriebe, SÖB) take care of integrating people with disabilities in the primary labour market.

c. Community building

Communities for people with disabilities and their families usually exist at an NGO level. More financially self-sustainable solutions (e.g. social enterprises working with people with disabilities) with a higher innovation and growth potential insufficiently satisfy the demand. One good example in Bratislava is [Združenie na pomoc ľuďom s mentálnym postihnutím](#) (Association to help people with mental disabilities) which provides social services, counselling, advocacy, inclusive employment through [Bivio](#) (restaurant/hotel/laundry). In Austria, social businesses such as Hausaktiv or Freuraum take particular care of establishing a closer community of disadvantaged or disabled persons with various actions, in addition to their core activities (labour market integration, education, etc.).

5.2.5 Homeless population in Slovakia or Austria

a. Housing

Homeless people need education/guidance, housing and employment all at once in order to be able to get integrated back into society. Not all efforts to integrate homeless people back to society combine all the necessary aspects: housing, education/guidance and employment.

b. Employment

As the concept of Housing First (housing with professional support – a concept adopted both in Austria and then in Slovakia) explains, no long-term sustainable employment is possible without other aspects to be taken care of such as housing and support/guidance. Especially for homeless people, housing and guidance are essential to come back to the labour market. In Slovakia, not all efforts to integrate homeless people back to society combine all the necessary aspects: housing, education/guidance and employment. Simultaneously, not any kind of employment is suitable for people who are trying to get out

of homelessness. A gradual integration into job market with professional and psychological guidance on top of a hard and soft skills training is often necessary.

c. Community building

As with everyone else, living or spending time in a community of others going through similar issues may help immensely with motivation and a sense of belonging. Examples of housing/community are below.

5.2.6 Children and Youth in need in Slovakia or Austria

a. Housing

Children and young people might be in need of affordable and good-quality housing options, in particular when they are coming from a disadvantaged background, e.g. raised by single parents, coming from care homes, being of Roma or migrant backgrounds. They are often not able to afford market-level (rent) prices and thus are in need of practical administrative and financial advice, which might not be fulfilled by official service providers.

b. Employment

Young people without a proper education or skill set, which is exacerbated when they are coming from a disadvantaged background such as Roma or migrant, have increased problems of finding appropriate employment opportunities or jobs at all. In Austria, specific social integration enterprises or socio-economic businesses might enable the more efficient and smoother entrance of such young people to the primary labour market. Additional training services (not only in „hard“ but also in „soft“ skills and psychological counseling) might be needed, which requires an integrated approach of providing employment, skills training and counseling.

c. Community building

Not unlike elderly people, youth (especially from disadvantaged backgrounds) can feel overtly isolated and abandoned while at school or when starting with their first „real“ job experience. In Austria, special service providers such as Volkshilfe with its Care Leaver Mentoring programme aim to support children and adolescents in these complicated life situations.

5.3 Environment

The regional governments of Bratislava and Trnava regions have included social inclusion in their “priority areas” when it comes to their strategy in their programme for economic and social development (“Program hospodárskeho a sociálneho rozvoja = PHSR”).

Generally speaking, the solutions stemming solely from **public initiatives** (organizations funded and run by public institutions) have their limitations. Due to lack of competition, there is often not enough effectiveness in implementing the latest/most proven methods available. Simultaneously, there are often not enough capacities for growth to accommodate all people that are in need.

Private or semi-private initiatives working for social inclusion include:

- non-profit organizations or associations
- registered social enterprises, acting under the Law of Social Economy (Slovakia)
- social enterprises as private companies focusing on impact and business in one but not registered

These organizations often have in-depth knowledge of the issue of the group of people they are dealing with. They are passionate about bringing change and they often do employ innovative practices. Their problem though is many times lack of financing and strategic/managerial capacity to expand their activities beyond a small group of people.

Non-profit organizations or associations face some of the same problems as publicly run initiatives especially in terms of flexibility and effectiveness when it comes to innovation and growth. They spend a lot of their time and capacities on fundraising, building and sustaining relationships, and grant administration. Managerial and strategic skills/capacities that would aid innovation, growth or expansion are often missing. Often, operations depend on many volunteer hours worked for NGOs and its focused groups of people.

Social enterprises are not many and lack functional support from the state and various types of private funding sources for the value added they create not in terms of added income but in terms of a positive impact on our society overall. In Slovakia, there are support schemes available for officially “registered” social enterprises, but their implementation is not yet effective and/or functional. Social enterprises themselves often lack the skill of effectively communicating their value added in terms of the positive impact that they create towards public institutions and other sources of financing. Their services delivered should be “priced” and paid as regular service, regardless if it is provided to the private or state sector. They are basically treated by “outsiders” as any kind of entrepreneurial entities even though their view of profit vs. positive impact differs from that of a regular enterprise. Their goal is not merely profit maximizing but rather finding a balance between generating profit and creating impact.

Austria has a long tradition of different public and private entities providing the types of social inclusion services discussed in this Section. There are legally however no specific form reserved for social enterprises but organisations fulfilling activities of social character (such as social inclusion activities) may choose from several forms best aligned with their business and operational purposes. Such legal forms include associations, public-benefit limited liability companies and co-operatives. Based on a recent study on social enterprises in Austria, there are altogether around 1 500 social enterprises in the country, among which some 1 000 associations work in the social inclusion field (including cultural and creative industries, see relevant Section), and a further 320 public-benefit limited liability companies, 70 limited liability companies with a prioritized social objective (but no public-benefit status) and 120 cooperatives are active in various socially beneficial fields, mostly in housing (but also education, which is the topic of the next Section).

The variety in the legal forms is also reflected in the different types of social enterprises active in Austria, depending upon the nature and extent of social activities a company undertakes. On the one hand, there are (collective or more individual) social enterprises fulfilling socially beneficial activities while still firstly being a business with a commercial character. On the other hand, non-profit organisations (NPOs) and cooperatives focus traditionally more on fulfilling some social mission than making business but there are examples of large cooperatives evolving into pure profit-oriented businesses.

The societal/social impact made by stakeholders providing social inclusion services manifests itself primarily in the implementation of the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's):

SDG 1 No poverty

SDG 3 Health and well-being

SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth

SDG 10 Less inequality

With regard to their financing, social enterprises still rely on various sources of public funding (which is considered the greatest uncertainty factor according to the interviewed stakeholders) such as the Federal Social Office, the AMS (the Public Employment Service) or the Province of Burgenland, but increasingly tend to generate income by public contracts or sales to private customers; this is particularly true for innovative new social enterprises such as start-ups (see e.g. the interview with three coins). Any surpluses are reinvested, e.g. new equipment, machines, renovation work, etc. Larger investments can only be financed through public subsidies. However, additional sources of income such as donations, charity events and bazaars represent only a rather small inflow of funds.

The biggest cost factor is naturally the personnel costs for key staff in the enterprises (master craftsmen and journeymen), socio-pedagogical counselors, psychologists and administrative staff. Voluntary work still plays an important role in certain sectors, especially among smaller community-led cooperatives (e.g. see interview with Wogen) or in social enterprises that are close to the NPO sector (e.g. see interview with Volkshilfe).

In comparison to Slovakia, the Austrian eco-system of social entrepreneurship for social inclusion and related services is more developed but still faces notable issues, such as institutional fragmentation and a lack of visibility of the sector stemming from the lack of a specific legal form; the need for sustainable funding structures (e.g. long-term financing in place of short-term funding options, see e.g. interview with die Caterei or the situation of other socio-economic enterprises) which also raises the interconnected issues of inadequate political support and the little recognition of social enterprises and their positive socio-economic contribution through social inclusion service delivery.

However there are some positive ongoing trends making way for optimism, such as the changing attitude towards social enterprises among younger generations, coupled with a growing visibility and recognition of the sector. This is manifested in the increasing (formal and informal) networking and a growing (economic-business) professionalization of

persons and businesses dealing with social inclusion services. Public authorities (slowly) react to these trends by more and more offering better streamlined supporting schemes for social enterprises.

5.4 Interviews

Housing for marginalized Roma communities in Slovakia - a municipality

Lozorno municipality

- The municipality of Lozorno is working on developing a financing scheme to aid inhabitants gain legal ownership to the properties on which they have built houses. Lozorno is at the same time working on creating work opportunities and social services for all of their inhabitants that need them.
- Lozorno has built a system of Eduboxes where volunteers mentor and help children from the Roma community with a study, organizing the free time activities for them. This project was nominated for an award SocialMarie 2021 and Roma Spirit 2020. (cesta-mladych.webnode.sk/edubox/)
- It also provides a social taxi service for elderly.

All these activities are easily replicable to other regions and municipalities.

Housing for marginalized Roma communities in Slovakia - a non-profit organization

Foundation Pre Dobro

Foundation Pre Dobro (meaning “For good”) works mainly with social inclusion of the marginalized Roma communities living in the town of Gbely, Kopčany and surroundings. Pre dobro carries out many various activities, while one of their main ones is offering temporary social housing for people in need. The foundation is also able to help their temporary tenants to find work and to later rent or buy their own space to live. In the temporary housing solutions that Pre Dobro offers, there are usually multiple families/tenants living at once, each in their own flat or room. Pre Dobro understands the need of combining housing, employment and community building and is actively working on providing a type of help that offers all of these aspects. Pre Dobro has several volunteers and coordinators that contribute to the foundation’s work. (predobro.sk)

Housing for marginalised communities in Austria, in particular long-term unemployed and immigrants

Dahir

Dahir is a socio-economic property management company handling several real estates in Graz and Vienna (altogether 700 flats). It aims to support vulnerable tenants, in particular migrants and (long-term) unemployed by offering supplementary property management services, in addition to „traditional“ services, such as pre-selection of new tenants, commission-free access to rental flats, flexible payment options for new tenants, provision of house technicians, provision of an integration manager, organisation of interpretation services (Turkish and Arabic), get-together events, community activities, etc. The key feature of all these additional services is a close connection to the tenants and owners where problems are tackled in an individual and proactive way. (dahir.eu/)

Housing for the homeless population and people on the fringes of society - a hybrid non-profit / social enterprise organization

Brána do života

Non-profit organization located in Bratislava - Petržalka provides social, psychological, legal counselling to persons at risk of domestic or partner violence, poverty and discrimination. It brings asyl / housing for them. It serves also as a “half-way” housing for children leaving special facilities for children without parents or children from non functional families. To keep the financial sustainability and to support the very tight budget the organization fundraises various grants and sponsorships for their activities. (branadozivota.sk)

[OZ Stopa](#) (not interviewed) in Bratislava (among others) taking care of homeless people.

Housing first concept implemented by a municipality

The City of Bratislava

Bratislava is active when it comes to various aspects of social inclusion, one of those is the aim to implement the Housing First concept to help homeless people sustainably. (bratislava.sk/sk/dostupne-byvanie)

Ubytovňa Fortuna

Ubytovňa Fortuna (Fortuna social housing), is run by the municipality of Bratislava and it offers temporary accommodation for people in need - social housing. Along with housing service Bratislava city provides social counseling as well. (bratislava.sk/sk/ubytovna-fortuna)

Housing First

Housing First - this is a common concept between Austria and Slovakia (see interview with Sozial Marie, indicating that similar solutions have been awarded in both countries),

implemented by many organizations including the city of Bratislava, Housing Cverna (Vagus civic association) or Nota Bene. The city of Bratislava got inspired by the successful case of a pilot implementation of this concept in Brno, Czech Republic, or by the case of Finland where the concept of Housing First is integrated in their national politics against homelessness (source: bratislava.sk/sk/dostupne-byvanie). The city of Bratislava collaborates in their implementation of the concept with civic associations Proti prúdu, Vagus and Návrat. Their strategy lays in combining housing first with intensive social counseling, which focuses mainly on maintaining housing, health, stabilizing income or developing healthy neighborly relations. Target groups are homeless families and homeless people of senior age or people with disabilities.

As the name indicates the concept provides housing as a priority, allowing clients to focus on getting out of their social difficulties, while their housing is being taken care of. Housing Cverna argues that providing housing first, instead of waiting until the client gets out of his problems and earns enough money to sustain a stable housing by himself, pays off more in the long run. Cases from abroad show us that 8 out of 10 clients that went through a housing first programme have gotten out of homelessness. (source: vagus.sk/housing-first-cverna/21/pristup-housing-first/) Housing Cverna is also focussing on the quality of the housing and interiors provided and on the community in which the housing is set to provide a favorable environment for inclusion. Nota Bene is also providing accessible housing under the housing first concept, while they combine it with an employment opportunity for clients in the form of magazine sales that Nota Bene is publishing. Nota Bene also provides guidance, how to be able to afford rent and how to combine different sources of income (social income from the state, income from magazine sales, other part-time jobs). Nota Bene is combining the concepts of housing first, employment and guidance to create their success.

Housing for people with disabilities

Andreas - social service provider for people with autism spectrum (see the Social Services chapter above)

Housing and Community building

Punkt

The NGO is an initiator of many activities and brings sustainable ideas for inclusive cities. It connects the professionals and public in order to improve the environment in the cities. It has founded a Platforma o ľuďoch a mestách (Platform about people and cities ctzn.punkt.sk), a critical online platform for architecture and urbanism, environmental issues, participatory processes and sustainable development. It cooperates also with the Spiace mesta (Sleeping towns - see paragraph below). Among the most recent is a project of reconstruction and revitalization of the Pálffy manor in Malacky with the aim to create from the manor house a cultural and community space that would provide quality conditions for spending valuable time for both inhabitants of Malacky and visitors from all over the region. A similar organisation interviewed in Vienna is Eutopian. (punkt.sk)

Spiace miesta

Spiace miesta is a platform mapping unused buildings and matching them with a future user. Spiace miesta is aiming to find a future use for the abandoned buildings that has a positive impact on our society - e.g. cultural spaces, shared community living, artist studios. (spiacemiesta.sk/)

Imagine

Real estate developer focusing on projects creating not only houses but homes, communities, and sustainable architecture. So called impact developer. (imaginehome.eu)

Wogen

Wogen is Austria's first and only property developer that exclusively realises community housing projects with and for people who want to live in the community. It supports its members in starting and implementing community housing projects. WoGen functions as a neighbourhood community in the legal form of a co-operative. It is owned and financed by its members who pay different levels of contributions. The objective of WoGen is two-fold: (1) people bring to the community certain assets, such as their time, expertise, materials and money and therefore get an option to live cheaper, as well as for an indeterminate period – the latter is a big problem in Vienna where most people cannot get a rented flat for an indeterminate period; (2) WoGen has the strategic goal to move away these properties from the market and thus from speculative investors. (diewogen.at/)

Wohnbuddy

Wohnbuddy arranges suitable living partners through an online platform for older people as well as nursing homes. These are mostly young people (university students) who provide time for joint activities as well as support in everyday life for affordable living space. This serves for both solving accommodation (housing) issues of young people as well as fostering a stronger and more solidaristic community between younger and older generation, while providing informal social care and assistance services to elderly in need. (wohnbuddy.com/)

Reparatur und Service Zentrum R.U.S.Z

R.U.S.Z is a non-profit social enterprise and combines social and economic goals and activities by operating various repair, refurbishment, rental and collection services provided for electric and electrical equipment in the Vienna area. R.U.S.Z can be understood as a centre for consumer protection and sustainability operating Austria's largest re-use centre for big household appliances. In addition, sharing economy concept is introduced by "Clean Laundry" where washing machines and dryers can be rented for a fee. The company also trains disadvantaged people for technicians and offers support in its "Repair Café" to teach all interested on how to repair their own small appliances at home. (rusz.at/)

Community building for young people

Care Leaver Mentoring

Care Leaver Mentoring programme run by Volkshilfe Vienna is aimed at supporting young people coming out of residential care to have a better chance of effectively and efficiently integrating into society. Young people between 15 and 18 (leaving or about to leave their care homes) are supported by volunteer mentors acting as a companion and advice-giver in all types of practical situations. This set-up provides long-term support for a successful transition out of statutory residential care with professional assistance and guidance. (volkshilfe-wien.at/soziale-arbeit/kinder-und-jugendliche/care-leaver-mentoring/)

Inclusive employment opportunities for various groups - social enterprises

Tenenet / Wellnea

Organization Tenenet has set up a social enterprise Wellnea, which offers beauty and wellness services in the town of Senec, Bratislava region. The enterprise employs women from the Roma community, women that are 50+ and other women that are struggling on the job market. (wellnea.sk/)

Bivio

Bivio is a social enterprise running a hotel, a restaurant and a laundry room. In these three entrepreneurial entities they employ people with disabilities in collaboration with the Association for helping people with a mental disability in Slovak republic (“Združenie na pomoc ľuďom s mentálnym postihnutím v Slovenskej republike (ZPMP v SR)”). The main goal of Bivio is to integrate people with a mental disability into society. Bivio wants people with a mental disability to become accepted by the society, become able to work, relax, have friends and lead a family life. (bivio.sk)

Hento toto

Hento toto is a gift-product brand, creating gift products (postcards, brooches, badges, t-shirts, bags) with the motives drawn by people with mental disabilities and digitalized and brought onto products by professional graphic designers. Hento toto is creating work, educational, artistic and leisure opportunities for people with disabilities. They sell their products online and in 50 stores around Slovakia and Czechia. Products are unique due to the original drawings made by people with intellectual disabilities. Hento toto is a brand created under the civic association Bol raz jeden človek. (hentototo.sk/)

Afb

Afb is doing green and social IT. They employ people with a health disadvantage and their product is bringing hardware discarded by large firms back to life. Afb is a multinational company with an Austrian branch in Vienna and an Eastern European branch in Trnava in Slovakia. Afb is the shortcut of the German “Arbeit für Menschen mit Behinderung” which means “work for people with a health disability”. Afb’s goal is to become a worldwide social

enterprise within IT refurbishment. Currently, Afb is present in Germany, Slovakia, Austria, France and Switzerland. (afb-group.eu/)

Omama

Omama is a project from the NGO Cesta von (meaning “the way out”). The NGO deals with the way out of poverty. Omama is a project that employs women from the marginalized Roma communities to become so-called “Omamas”, who educate new mothers how to take care of their children aged 0-3. Omamas become experts on early child development and teach mothers living in the marginalized communities how to play with their kids in a way that supports their future development. The fact is that growing up in poverty and in the toxic stress that poverty brings with it, leads children to lag behind in development, while they are not able to catch up with the lag later in life. Poverty then becomes a cycle as children that were born poor perform worse at school, oftentimes do not finish their education, are unable to find stable and well paid employment and continue in their parents' fate. Omama is a way to educate and employ women from the marginalized community to help the marginalized community and break the poverty cycle. (cestavon.sk/projekt-omama/index)

Vinosady municipality

The municipality of Vinosady is active in creating socially inclusive job opportunities for various groups of people.

Die Caterei

Die Caterei is a socio-economic business (sozialökonomischer Betrieb) to support the job re-integration of persons who are long away from the regular labour market. Die Caterei offers them job opportunities in fields related to kitchen activities (kitchen, serving tables, catering, office and cleaning), as well as compulsory training activities to make them more “job ready”. After the individual interviews of candidates sent to the company by the Public Employment Service in Vienna (ams), a 6-week preparatory work is organised, which can be followed by a max. 9-month contract. During this period, the suitable candidates should be prepared to enter the regular labour market on their own (diecaterei.at/)

FreuRaum

FreuRaum eG is run in the legal form of a registered cooperative, which has existed since June 2018. The common good economy and the sustainability goals are to be seen as the basis of the entire company. Among other things, it is a training company for the reintegration of people into the labour market or first-time integration, up to the training of a shortened apprenticeship for adults in the field of gastronomy (Fachfrau:Fachmann, Koch:Köchin, Kellner:in, Bürofachkraft) 2021 five apprentices and one person with integration assistance were employed. Reintegration is offered for six months, mainly after long-term sick leave, for example due to psychological problems, in order to find security again. The target group is mainly women, especially with a migration background, or over 50 years of age. During their training, the employees receive support from volunteer buddies of FreuRaum, for example in German or accounting. (freu-raum.at)

Jamba

Jamba offers job-matching and learning services for people with disabilities and interested companies. Jamba first started in Bulgaria and then was adopted in Hungary and Austria (the main focus in Austria lies in ICT companies). A „simple“ online recruitment platform was the original concept but it soon got extended with additional supporting services. The Jamba virtual platform offers a range of free-of-charge services to people with disabilities, such as offline and online training courses on soft skills, English and professional skills, as well as 'after care' in case somebody needs support in their new working environments. In addition, the following activities are part of their service package: standard (HR) recruitment service offered to corporates on a commission basis; consultancy offered to firms and other partners in the topics of diversity; workshops on topics of diversity for interested companies; accessibility assessment for interested companies; and annual events such as career fair for people with disabilities. (jambacareers.at/en/)

Hausaktiv

Hausaktiv is an Austrian social business funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs, in cooperation with the Public Employment Service in Vienna (ams) with the aim of supporting the labour market (re-)integration of unemployed people with mental or physical disabilities after a 1-year training and care programme offered in practical fields, such as cleaning, trade, retail, gardening or craftsmanship. People with disabilities can thus get used to work before their actual placement and Hausaktiv can generate revenues from their own economic activities. Hausaktiv also supports the placement, after-care and career monitoring of people with disabilities. (hausaktiv.at/)

Verein Heinzelfrauen

The association Heinzelfrauen was founded in 1997 by Wilma Fischer as an association of women for women. The socio-economic enterprise (SÖB) is financed by the Public Employment Service Burgenland and by generating its own income. The aim is to place long-term unemployed and/or older women in the primary labour market. The main tasks include the provision of temporary jobs, the elimination of placement barriers, reintegration into the regular labour market, the improvement of reintegration chances through targeted, professional qualification, as well as personal development. At the same time, targeted socio-educational support is provided to promote the women's personal development and self-confidence. The Heinzelfrauen association offers support to transit workers where help is needed to eliminate or minimise adverse living conditions. (heinzelfrauen.at)

Verein VAMOS

VAMOS is a non-profit association that deals with all issues related to the integration of people with special needs in all areas of life. The aim is to provide young people, adults and children with an offer geared to their needs for development and advancement in work and leisure in order to be able to lead an independent life. The services offered by VAMOS are very diverse and range from apprenticeship places at seven locations in the district of Oberwart in southern Burgenland to integration in the work process to personal counselling, coaching and its own VAMOS Academy. Apprenticeships are offered in the areas of carpentry, kitchen and confectionery, landscape conservation, housekeeping, print

and design. But services such as office services and postal partners are also part of the comprehensive programme. (vereinvamos.at)

Support in finding employment & support in creating inclusive employment opportunities, community building - non-profit organizations and associations, impact incubators

EPIC

Main goals of EPIC Slovakia are *“influencing public policies on employment and social inclusion of marginalized groups, initiating and assisting in preparation and implementation of programmes targeting increased employment on the local level, awareness-raising on employment of people with various types of disabilities, providing individualized employment services designed for disadvantaged groups.”*¹ Together with 6 other countries, EPIC is currently running an EU funded educational programme within the Central Europe Interreg project CERUSI (1.2.2020-28.2.2022), which is lead by SEED-Hub project partner Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI) with the aim of *“improving skills and entrepreneurial skills to support economic and social innovation in Central European regions and to improve their competitiveness. The intention is also to create social-innovative mobile laboratories for the presentation and transfer of skills and information in the field of social innovation, social entrepreneurship and the circular economy.”*² In their educational programme, EPIC mostly engages mayors of small villages and towns around Slovakia and aids them with practical advice and hints they need to know in order to create a social enterprise in their municipality. Their help is mostly legal, financial or administrative, on occasion help with time management and reporting. EPIC creates connections between participants of the educational programme and experts to provide solutions to specific problems. (epic-org.eu)

Pracujúce mamy (transl. Working Moms)

Pracujúce mamy is a civic association advocating for flexible job opportunities accessible for mothers on or after maternity leave and a job advertising platform for flexible job offers. Pracujúce mamy offers a service to corporates of tailor made recommendations and implementation of practices that improve the working environment for parents. For mothers, Pracujúce mamy offers career advisory and webinars and inspirational resources that help mothers get back into a work life. Currently the association is preparing a complex educational programme that will facilitate return to work after a parental leave. pracujucemamy.sk/

¹ <https://epic-org.eu/en/about-us/>

² <https://epic-org.eu/cerusi/>

Spoločnosť na pomoc osobám s autizmom - SPOSA (Society to help people with autism)

SPOSA is a network of people throughout Slovakia with the purpose of integration of people suffering from autism in cooperation with selected employers and accompanied by specially trained lecturers. Their aim is to train selected people with autism in simpler and safer jobs, which they will be able to continue to perform even without the presence of lecturers. (sposa.sk)

One of the founders has developed an autism simulator to teach organizations, educators and firms how to understand and work with people with autism using a virtual reality application. They also create a community for people with autism and help them to find jobs. (sposa.sk/en/autism-simulator)

Sozialmarie

Social Marie awards a financial prize for social innovation every year in the countries of middle and eastern Europe. Other than financially, Social Marie helps participating organizations to gain visibility in the media. (sozialmarie.org/sk)

Nová Cvernovka

Nová Cvernovka is a cultural-creative centre that was created by reconstructing an old, unused building of a previous industrial high school. On top of bringing life to a previously non-hip area of Bratislava, Nová cvernovka provides a community garden, public park, playground for children, public library and 132 creative and artist studios. Nová cvernovka offers cultural and educational events in the sphere of music, visual arts, literature, film, theatre and other multi-genre activities. Nová Cvernovka offers a barrier-free access. The shopping area of the building hosts small, local, creative brands (Artattack shop & room, People on Earth – FRL, Čierne diery, Živávlina, Mile, Lebo Mäďved', Ateliér Ovál), as well as a market of more local brands is regularly organized. Nová cvernovka creates space for a dialogue between culture, art, ecology, science and active citizenship and fights against prejudice, discrimination, racism and xenophobia. (novacvernovka.sk)

Coworking Cvernovka / Be the change

Coworking Cvernovka offers a coworking space connected with a child care club, bringing together freelancers, artists, non-profit organizations, social enterprises and small businesses under one roof. On top of being a popular coworking space, Coworking Cvernovka organizes a 3-month-long educational programme for social entrepreneurs Be the change. In addition to being an educational opportunity, the programme's jury will select 3 best participants that will win a financial prize and membership in Coworking Cvernovka. Coworking cvernovka is situated in the building of cultural and creative centre Nová Cvernovka. (coworkingcvernovka.sk/)

YMCA in Slovakia (Young Men's Christian Association)

A non-profit youth organization that creates space and time for the growth and development of young people and the communities in which they live. It unites Christians of different faiths, non-believers, Roma communities, people of different ages in continuity across generations. The YMCA gives great freedom to young people, enabling them to be active and to change themselves and their surroundings. It has 13 local associations

throughout Slovakia providing a variety of programmes and services to meet the changing needs of young people in their local communities. In Bratislava, it possesses a building with a great potential to realize and further develop more social goals - mainly as community and culture spaces, affordable accommodation, coworking.

Römerland Carnuntum

The Regional Development Association Römerland Carnuntum is committed to strengthening and further developing the region of Römerland Carnuntum. The purpose of the association is to maintain and improve the living conditions in the region and to raise the profile of the living, working, economic and educational space in the region of Römerland Carnuntum. The Römerland Carnuntum team sees itself as a networker, idea provider, advisor, implementer, moderator and service provider for communities, companies, institutions and regional initiatives. The association Römerland Carnuntum sees itself as a socially innovative enterprise and implements funding and projects within the framework of LEADER. (roemerland.at)

Other projects worth to be mentioned (not interviewed):

Community centre [Stará Jedáleň](#) or initiative [Mládež ulice](#) (transl. Street Youth) - field social work with children and youth, family work and community work.

[Arta](#) in Piešťany - a new creative and cultural space in the Trnava region in the development phase. Recently officially rented and partially financed by a bank.

Housing, education, employment, community building, advocacy IN ONE

Človek v ohrození

Through various types of social inclusion and integration programmes the organization finds and applies new ways of solving problems related to the issue of socially excluded Roma localities in Slovakia - extreme poverty, long-term unemployment, low level of education, unsatisfactory housing conditions or tense relations with the majority society. Job counseling. Education. Financial literacy. Housing (projektodomov.sk microloan programme, restoration of Roma sites).

Activities run by State

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic

The Ministry of Labour is engaged in activities related to social economy development including regional centres that support social entrepreneurship. Under the Ministry of Labour, the Implementation Agency is established. It manages 7 regional centres for support of the social economy in 7 Slovak regions. It is understood by ministry and legislation that the social enterprise is defined as a “registered” social enterprise under the Law on Social Economy. However they count only a small portion of all social economy entities solving social issues in Slovakia.

Implementation Agency (IA) for Social Economy of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and its regional centres

The mission of IA is to successfully and effectively implement projects aimed at helping to integrate the socially weaker into society and increase employment. In Slovakia, it is possible to become a state-registered social enterprise. If an enterprise is registered (officially = registered social enterprise), it is eligible for investment help from the state. The investment help however is provided by a bank, not by the state itself and the organization asking for investment help needs to apply for it independently. What the Implementation Agency does is to aid social entrepreneurs in business plan creation when it comes to legal requirements and project's financial sustainability. The Implementation Agency does not follow up with the social entrepreneurs further once they fulfilled the requirements to become a registered social enterprise.

The agency with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Slovak State Television and funds from the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund under the Human Resources Operational programme has developed a special publicist show Cesty Istoty which brings to the public information about the new legislative rules to support the development of the social economy in Slovakia and at the same time show inspiring examples of good practice of successful registered social enterprises. The IA plans to create the space for registered social enterprises (at socialnaekonomika.sk) for their presentation and selling their products and services (ia.gov.sk).

Out of region (as an inspiration)

Area: Social inclusion - Education

Kaba

Kaba Slovakia is a non-profit organization that bridges education and the labour market. They are currently based in Martin, Žilina Region with a potential to spread to other regions. Kaba is active in providing internship opportunities for students in Slovakia and abroad, organizing education programmes for long-term unemployed and many other projects. Kaba has created the project kabaci.sk offering services as complex career advisory, career advisor training, employee development, active work life for seniors. Kabaci aims to be rather independent of grant funding and function as a social enterprise.

Area: Social inclusion - Housing, Employment

Dobrý pastier

Dobrý pastier (translates as "Good Shepherd") is a large civic association with locations all over Slovakia. One of their locations is in Jelka, Trnava region, while their largest location is in Kláštor pod Znievom, Žilina region. Dobrý pastier is, from what we know, the biggest social inclusion and social care non-profit in Slovakia with approximately 14 social inclusion or social care units, 600 clients and 150 employees who are also past clients, that have trained themselves to become employees. Dobrý pastier accepts people that found themselves on the fringes of society and want to integrate themselves back. Dobrý pastier offers them housing, food, community and work therapy. Clients work in workshops

(upcycling, repairs of old furniture, upholstery), agriculture (small scale livestock farming, making cheese, growing vegetables and fruits), catering services, creative workshops, cooking, cleaning for the locations they live in etc. The association Dobrý pastier is run by a christian priest Vladimír Maslák and Ján Košturiak, who is also an advisor for innovation and strategic management in the business sector and has a wide network of business partners. Dobrý pastier uses some of their spaces to organize regular conferences or business workshops for their business network (ozdobrypastier.eu/).

Area: Social Inclusion - Employment, Community building, Housing

Aptet

Aptet has already been mentioned when it comes to social care. Their take on social care and social inclusion is very wide and complex. The organization is creating work opportunities for people that struggle on the labour market. They also offer community support groups and are moving towards offering a complex solution Employment - Housing - Community. This plan includes providing assisted services in employment to vulnerable people and building the community by also planning to provide them with affordable housing (aptet.sk).

5.5 Potential cross-border solutions for Slovakia and Austria

All of the above entities provide unique solutions to societal challenges. Some of the most interesting solutions that we have encountered have included multiple aspects in one solution. These organizations have realized the need to design the execution of their solutions well to truly work in the long term. They all are worthy of scaling and suitable financing schemes and a sufficient number of professionals would help to multiply their positive impact.

There is much potential for organizations working with the same group of people within similar services to exchange knowledge cross-border and expand their methods to the other organization in the neighboring country. However, it must be remembered that there are different legal framework conditions in both countries to which special attention must be paid.

Here in particular the financing models are worth mentioning; in Austria, mainly via the AMS supporting among others the socio-economic enterprises.

One can imagine cooperation through the exchange of experts and managers in the individual training centres and on the socio-educational side. Synergies/scaling could be generated in the border region between Austria and Slovakia, provided the legal framework conditions are clarified.

Lessons learned

As seen in Slovakia, the Law on Social Economy is not an ultimate tool to increase the awareness of doing business and impact in one. Empathy and a sensitive approach in

solving societal issues in a sustainable manner (also financially) is a way of functioning the economy in the future.

The following examples are worth mentioning:

5.5.1 Socio-economic enterprises

Since 1993, so-called **socio-economic enterprises** (sozio-ökonomische Betriebe, SÖB) aim to (re-)integrate disadvantaged groups into the labour market by offering short-term fix jobs under close-to-market circumstances in various areas. SÖBs are typically smaller-scale enterprises run by non-profit associations. One of their main benefits is that they work close to the market and thus know what kind of training is needed for specific groups of disadvantaged persons, as well as offer (often compulsory) additional services, such as consulting, care or health support, in addition to training. SÖBs are a main instrument for labour market integration of long-term unemployed people (whose situation may be the result of various socio-economic conditions such as migration background, age, disability, illness or low skills). SÖBs are financed from public sources, e.g. in Vienna by AMS but also have an economic side with certain turnover to be reached through the employment of people far from the labour market. In addition to economic goals, their primary social indicator pertains to the share of persons finding a job on the primary labour market after leaving the formal short-term employment contract concluded with the SÖB. Based on our interviews, financing is one of the crucial issues of this type of social enterprises since AMS mostly enters into short-term financing contracts with their SÖB clients. Furthermore, it is crucial that these organisations maintain and operate networking (umbrella) structures to exchange experiences and gain a better leverage against policy-makers (lobbying) – see also „Networking and interest representation“ at the „Common Challenges“ Section. **Die Caterei**, one of the most successful such socio-economic enterprises involved in the catering sector is featured prominently in the „Best cases – Austria“ Section. Slovak regions or the Slovak state could find inspiration in adopting a similar entrepreneurship structure for similar purposes, which would need the revision of legal and financial structures but surely would entail high economic potential in the long term. The adaptation of SÖB-type solutions would make even more sense since the Slovak education system has a similar dual characteristic than the Austrian where commercial entities and public schools are closely cooperating with each for better labour market uptake. Inspiration (for SK) on how to work with unemployed people and help them to find a job: die Caterei - format of socio-economic businesses in broader sense.

5.5.2 Cooperatives

Another traditional Austrian business format to be considered for adoption in Slovakia is the **cooperative**, in particular its community-led type. Such solutions can be especially beneficial in the housing sector even though Austria and Slovakia have very different housing sectors where Slovakia is one of the top EU countries with the share of people living in own houses (around 90%), while in Austria there is a well-functioning rental market and cca. 45% of people rent their houses. New Austrian community-led cooperatives such as **Wogen** may serve as inspiration on how to realise community housing projects with and for people who want to live in community also in Slovakia. While in Austria such community housing is interesting for people who do not want to live under the current rental housing (association) system, in Slovakia the target group may be people who otherwise cannot

afford their own houses. The legal forms should be adopted to the Slovak framework and the financing may function as in Austria with the housing projects owned and financed by its own members who pay different levels of contributions. In addition to housing, there is a real community-building aspect of such cooperatives (which is surely missing from the more and more individualistic Slovak society) since community facilities, co-working spaces, shops and spaces for commercial enterprises as well as for social, economic and cultural use are also part of such projects. Participating people feel more empowered since they bring to the community certain assets, such as their time, expertise, materials and money and therefore get an option to live cheaper, as well as for an indeterminate period.

5.5.3 Branches of (multi-national) companies: Afb

Another option for providing cross-border solutions to similar challenges in both countries is not the adoption of a type of (social) entrepreneurship as mentioned by the examples of SÖB and community-led cooperatives, but to foster the Slovakian introduction of new branches of (multi-national) companies already successfully operating in Austria in the field of social service delivery. Some interviews have already been conducted with such organisations, either already present in both countries or planning to move from one country to another.

One such case study of a social enterprise present in Slovakia and Austria is afb (see also Section „Best cases – Austria). Afb is the acronym of the German term **“Arbeit für Menschen mit Behinderung”** which means “work for people with a health disability”. Their main business is to take discarded hardware from partner companies and, after certified deletion of stored data, modify it with the employment of people with health disadvantages in such a way that they can be used again (thus contributing to a more inclusive labour market, and a sustainable and green economy).

The introduction of the firm in Slovakia proves that legal, financial and labour market challenges can be overtaken with precise planning well in advance; for instance, financial and other support structures prevalent in Austria are not (yet) operative in Slovakia, standards are different in the two countries, the target group differs between the B2B and B2C segments and the concrete venue of selling recycled equipment has a distinct characteristic (online vs offline). Through this creative adaptation of working methods and processes, Afb in Slovakia can become a frontrunner in adopting new innovative tools and practices not (widely) used in the country yet, such as social impact bonds.

Afb’s goal is to become a worldwide social enterprise within IT refurbishment. Currently they are not only present in Austria and Slovakia but also in Germany, France and Switzerland.

5.5.4 Upscaling: SOS-Kinderdorf

Mag. Marek Zeliska is the head of SOS Kinderdorf Pinkafeld, which is a big player as a social enterprise in Burgenland, but also in Austria and all over the world. Slovakia is one of the last countries, where SOS Kinderdorf has no branch yet and there are considerations to expand/cooperate. Marek and his team at the SOS Kinderdorf are providing a broad range of services to children and families in need [Einrichtungen im Burgenland | SOS-Kinderdorf](#) especially short- and long term accommodation and pedagogic support and therapy for

children and families in crisis. Marek's roots are in Slovakia and is also active within the Slovak speaking community in Burgenland ([Marek Zeliska z SOS Kinderdorf | Pomoc pre rodiny a deti v núdzi - Slováci - Rádio & TV](#)). There is a potential of teaming up with a similar project in Bratislava within SEED Hub would be very prolific for both sides. We see **Brána do života** (info above) as one of possible partnering organizations.

5.5.5 Awards: SozialMarie – Prize for Social Innovation

Based on the interviews conducted, one general problem is that organisations in both countries do not know about each other and the potentially complementing social inclusion solutions. While knowledge and data exchange, as well as networking is crucial but it is likely to go on within country borders (see also „Networking and interest representation“ at the Common challenges Section) therefore other cross-country initiatives are also of benefit, such as awards. One of the most successful such award for social entrepreneurship active in both Austria and Slovakia is **SozialMarie**, which (through the Unruhe private foundation) awards a financial prize for social innovation solutions every year in the countries of Middle and Eastern Europe (Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia and Slovenia). Other than financially, It provides awards for new approaches, innovative answers or practices solving social issues. The award can be given to all kinds of enterprises and entrepreneurs (not just social enterprises but also NGOs, CSOs or private businesses) that implement or manage socially viable solutions addressing pressing challenges, not only in the field of technical innovation but also for social or organizational innovation. Altogether 16 awarding procedures have already taken place.

In addition to financial support, Social Marie helps participating organizations to gain visibility in the media and foster their networking. The main international networking event takes place each year on 1 May where all award winners and applicants are invited to exchange ideas in an informal setting, and project-level workshops are regularly held in-between (winning projects meet each other in different topics, e.g. to discuss where they would require further training). (more information is available on the website sozialmarie.org/sk)

6 Education

6.1 Definition of the Priority Area

By education we mean education in its various forms for all ages - from 0-100+ (early child development, age management, plus all ages between). The target groups from the social enterprise's environment are complex. The actual target group includes children from preschool age to high school, young people in training (apprentices), but also older people who want to get back into working life. However, the offer (e.g. teaching material) is also aimed at decision-makers in schools (headmasters, teachers) and in training centres (educators, trainers, supervisors, etc.).

6.2 Problem Definition

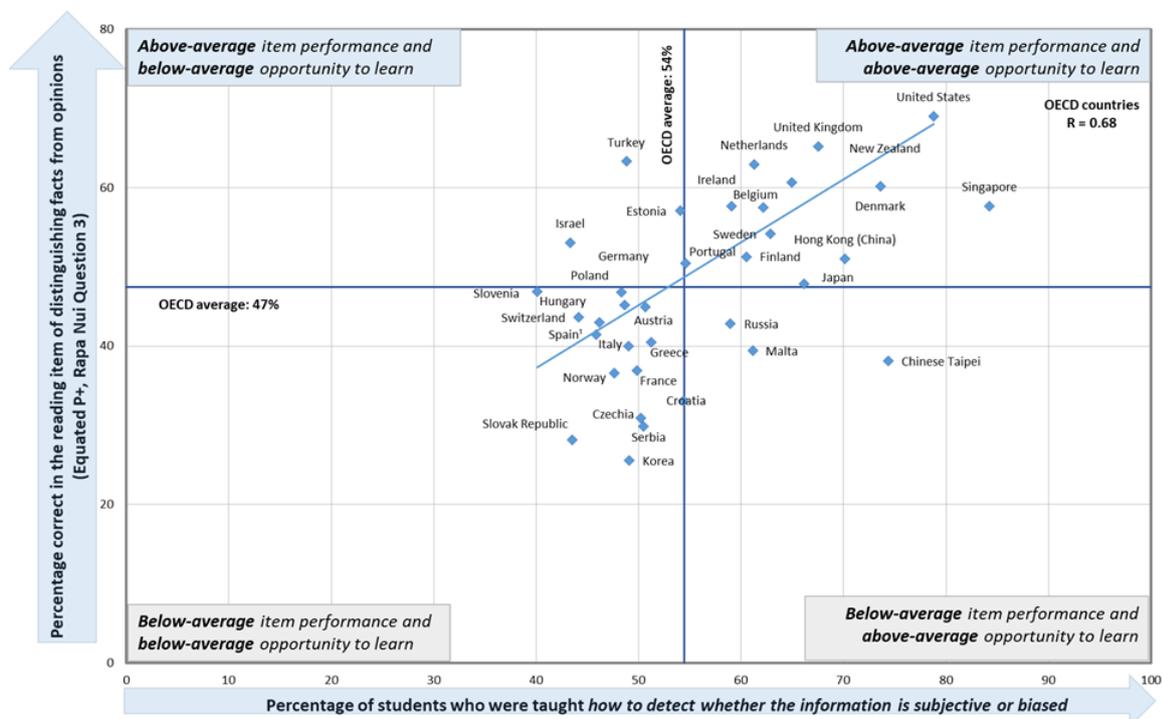
Based on several interviews conducted throughout our work in the education sector as well as while mapping and auditing the market players active in the area in Slovakia and Austria, we summarize the problem of this area as follows (indicating which problems pertain to which country and, where possible, in case of related problems, highlighting the situation in the other country).

6.2.1 Critical thinking

There is a limited number of schools that would teach students to **think critically** and to distinguish objective facts from biased information. Schools do not offer enough opportunity for students to develop skills needed for critical thinking, team-work skills and soft skills. This problem was mentioned in interviews with both Slovak and Austrian stakeholders, indicating a generally perceived problem with the lack of skills not traditionally present in school curricula.

This problem persists in both Austria and Slovakia, with Slovak students performing a bit worse based on data from OECD (see Chart below). This type of teaching methods partly stem from the traditional common education system implemented in the entire territory of the historical Habsburg monarchy.

Chart 1. OECD measures on critical thinking in education



Source: read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/21st-century-readers_a83d84cb-en#page1 p.46

6.2.2 Focus on theoretical knowledge

In Slovakia, **education is** in general highly **theoretical**, connection with practice and real-life work or hands-on experience is weak. In contrast, Austria has one of the best developed vocational education and training (VET) system, with one of the highest enrolment rates in OECD, coupled with a traditionally well-functioning dual education system.

There are not enough dual education opportunities that would combine apprenticeship with scholarly education in Slovakia. Firms in Slovakia say that students usually leave schools and enter their first workplace unprepared for real-life challenges and with underdeveloped soft skills (Source: interview with Kaba). The dual education system in Austria was in particular designed to deal with such issues and provide students from different types of background with the required practical knowledge after leaving school.

6.2.3 Lack of professional high schools

Due to the focus on more theoretical education, there are **not enough professional high schools** (odborné stredné školy) in Slovakia that would offer high quality education, and there is a brain drain towards secondary grammar schools (gymnázium) because of the generally higher quality - but more theoretical - education. At the higher level, there is “inflation” of universities with a low quality of education and too few internationally accredited, higher quality universities in Slovakia.

In Austria, fragmentation of (decision-making and financial) responsibilities between the central government, federal states, municipalities and schools cause inequality problems in the quality of higher education institutions and lower-level schools.

6.2.4 Misalignment of students' interests and schools chosen

Due to the structural issues mentioned above, such as the overabundance of secondary grammar schools and the persistent existence of low-quality higher education institutions, as well as the still-remaining cultural bias towards theoretical knowledge, a large number of **pupils choose a high school which is not the right one for their specific interests**. More than 30% of high school students in Slovakia study a field in which they have no real interest and only 10% of the total number of 3,000 schools use innovative methods of education. (Source: interview with Kaba) This problem is related to the fact that career advisory on primary and high schools is not adequate in most Slovak education institutions.

6.2.5 Lack of state-of-the-art learning tools and methods

Public education in Slovakia (including the concerned regions) is based on **obsolete methods**, neglecting innovative opportunities, including methods using new technologies. This is in part due to reluctance (resistance) from within the system, and in part due to insufficient funding. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital form of education was still inaccessible to a large part of the (especially marginalized) Slovak population.

While Austria performs much better in digitalisation, similar inequality problems with regard to access to digital platforms and/or internet still persists (vulnerable groups tend to have worse access).

6.2.6 High impact of socio-economic background on education outcomes

Education opportunities for children with **disadvantaged family backgrounds** are still systematically insufficient in certain cases in both countries.

In Slovakia, children in marginalized Roma communities (MRC) often grow up in an environment of extreme poverty and toxic stress, which causes insufficient mental development at an early age and these children will lag behind in school, they will be unable to catch up with the difference later. Due to this MRC often end up in special elementary schools with a low level of educational quality and without the possibility of graduation. This leaves them in the cycle of poverty they inherited from their parents. The Slovak educational system does not offer children from special schools the opportunity to complete their high school diploma, so children from MRC are often doomed to failure (source: interview with Cesta von and cestavon.sk/projekt-omama/index).

The fact is that schools in Slovakia are often divided between those that have the majority of pupils from the MRC and those that have the majority of pupils from the majority. The schools for the majority are usually in higher quality. Separating students by ethnicity or talent is impoverishing for society and ultimately leads to segregation. There is a white flight phenomenon present - parents from the majority withdraw their children from schools with a high percentage of pupils from MRCs. These schools are gradually declining in quality, and a form of segregation is being created.

The closure of small schools in small Slovak villages leads to the depopulation and disintegration of local communities, which gives an additional urban-rural layer to the inequality problems.

In Austria, the impact of students' socio-economic background on educational attainment and performance is still higher than the OECD average, meaning that the school system cannot mitigate the inherent disadvantages of vulnerable groups, mostly children with migration background. There are challenges in increasing the participation of such children in early childhood education and care (ECEC) and there is a lack of smooth transition from ECEC to primary education. The gaps in education achievement between students from disadvantaged or migration backgrounds and non-disadvantaged pupils still persist and even increase as the children are getting older and move away from primary education. In spite of the well-functioning dual education, there is a gap in choice of field of study and labour market outcomes for female and migrant students and younger adults. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that - even though the technical infrastructure is mostly advanced - the profession of teaching is not well-recognized and is financially not rewarded. This is also true for adult education provided for disadvantaged groups in Austria, such as migrants, people with disabilities or long-term unemployed.

6.3 Environment

Solutions to modernize education in Slovakia do exist, but usually only on a small scale or the level of individual innovative projects. There are multiple small social enterprises, non-profit organizations and civic associations that have developed and implemented

innovative and modern methodologies or forms of education, however, scaling their approaches to reach higher numbers of students or all students in the country is currently very difficult. The main obstacle to scaling is currently lack of human resources, managerial capacities and funding from public sources.

A strategy to scale/transform these innovative and effective methodologies and forms of education present currently on a small-scale to public education / large-scale access is needed. Currently the most relevant top-down support for innovation in education, the Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic, counts with the implementation of the reform by creating 40 regional centers, which will provide support to schools through mentoring, counseling and consulting activities. On average for every two districts there is one center with an average of 10 mentors. On the other hand, there is a kvalitneskolstvo.sk which is a platform of individuals and organizations aiming at systematic education from a bottom-up approach.

The Austrian school and education system is actually very well developed and covers the needs of children and young people very well. However, where there are gaps, and therefore also a need to catch up, is in the special needs of children and young people with handicaps (e.g. autism). This is where private initiatives come into play, mostly by affected parents, who try with great commitment to close these gaps. This concerns, for example, the development of own teaching materials that are adapted to the child's learning behavior. In the field of adult education and training, there is a focus on the one hand on promoting the personal education level and on the other hand on the field of apprenticeship training for special groups of people (e.g. young migrants).

The societal/social impact made by social enterprises and entrepreneurs involved in education and training activities manifests itself primarily in the implementation of the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's):

SDG 3 Health and well-being

SDG 4 Quality education

SDG 5 Gender equality

SDG 10 Less inequality

At the heart of the social impact of social enterprises is the integration of people with special needs who, either because of their particular physical or mental condition, or particular circumstances/situation, require an individual form of care/support. Social enterprises make a valuable contribution here to barrier-free access to education and training. The activities here range from simple counseling to complex teaching and learning materials. In the area of training, there is, for example, the possibility of shortened apprenticeship training (e.g. in gastronomy). But also special training and tailor-made projects for the pedagogical staff are offered.

Education is predominantly provided by public bodies funded from public sources in both countries however social enterprises might need to tap into private sources where pricing depends heavily on the uniqueness of their training offers (both in method and content).

The uniqueness of the offer and the customized solutions are repeatedly mentioned as a selling point. In addition to revenues from business activities, funding, but also alternative sources of income such as sponsoring, donations and more innovative methods such as social impact bonds or crowdfunding were mentioned as the most important source of financing. The biggest cost factor is naturally personnel costs. Investments are planned according to the availability of financial resources, e.g. in public relations (benefits must be communicated).

6.4 Interviews

Below is the list of identified entities we have interviewed and which provide various forms of education other than formal education provided by the state.

0-3 age:

Cesta von, project Omama

Activities and value they bring are described in the chapter on Social Inclusion.

Elementary school children:

Edulienka (private elementary school)

Edulienka is based on an open education concept. The school programme aims at the personal and social development of the child. Supporting personal development allows the child to acknowledge its own capabilities, opportunities, limits. Supporting its social development, the child is able to manage not only day-to-day situations, but also stressful social situations. Utilising the power of the context in the education Edulienka together with the child seeks the answer to the question why it is important and useful to fulfill certain goals. The content priority of the school are big global topics and its perception in the local contexts and the development of skills for the 21st century. From the very beginning of its activities the school is a part of Pilot Verification of the adjusted Framework Education Plan and Standards under the auspices of the State Pedagogical Institute.

Pontis (Generacia 3.0) (foundation)

Genrácia 3.0 is leading educational projects that usually start as civic associations or NGOs, to become social enterprises, start generating income from their activities and measure their impact.

The Generation 3.0 programme is an annual cycle during which the Pontis Foundation seeks innovative learning approaches, links them with the education community, helps them with an effective setup, and supports their dissemination to schools across Slovakia.

EDUcamp: An intensive 3-day event, at which the foundation connects selected projects with experts from business and the education system. The aim is to find ways to

disseminate educational approaches to more schools. Projects with the greatest dissemination potential then advance to the EDUaccelerator.

EDUakcelerátor: A 3-month mentoring and educational programme with an individual mentor and access to inspiring educational activities. It also includes financial support of up to 15 000 € per project.

EDUmapa: Executes mapping of innovative educational projects executed mostly by NGOs and active individuals. Provides an online platform with basic information regarding content and pricing of each educational project.

EDUpoint: Local innovative education centres, currently in 9 Slovak cities, connecting active teachers and innovative education providers and personal and professional development providers, conducting workshops, discussions etc. Helping local teachers to implement innovative approaches at their schools (generacia3.0.sk).

Pontis - project Budúcnosť inak (transl. as Future differently)

Specially tailored 3-years programme for elementary pupils (11-14 years) to develop their entrepreneurial, creative and solution-based thinking.

SchuBu

SchuBu provides practical learning materials for students aged between 10-14 aligned with compulsory educational standards in Austria. The aim is to provide such materials on a simple web platform (website – no need for installing a specific app) which can be easily used by teachers too (who are provided with supporting materials). The SchuBu website provides students with practical knowledge in different subjects, such as math, chemistry, physics, biology, geography, German. SchuBu works together with around 30 pilot schools and 2000 children in Austria and, dependent on their feedback, constantly updates the website. (schubu.systems/)

Molemental

Molemental's main product is "the smart box". It is a "toolbox" as a support for organisation / self-organisation for children's everyday school and private life. The area of application of the "clever box" is in the private sector, in kindergartens and in schools. The goal in developing this tool was to create barrier-free access to education for all children (especially also for children with disabilities). In this respect, Molemental is a social enterprise. (dieschlauebox.at)

High school / University students:

Nexteria

It is an NGO focusing on impact education of the (after)university students and helping them to grow as people ready to make positive changes and solve societal issues, while

building a community of active citizens. Nexteria provides both offline (3 years) and online (2 weeks) educational programmes for young people, organizes career events (Nights of Chances), offering a hub attracting young people studying and working abroad to get involved in Slovakia, connecting students with IT companies via workshops and various discussions.

Fakulta Manažmentu FMUK (Faculty of Management) and Economic University Bratislava

The team of SI within the SEED Hub cooperated with the universities in the form of making connections between students and real projects of interviewed entities. Students worked on preparing business plans and models and cash flow of chosen entities.

For all ages:

Kvalitneskolstvo.sk

The Slovak joint platform of people and organizations who care about the introduction of innovations into Slovak education, focusing on systematic change towards increasing its quality. They are parents, grandparents, teachers, professional guarantors, students, proactive schools and school facilities and their founders and supporters.

Lifestarter Trnava

Educational Hub active in Trnava and its region. It brings various projects that aim at increasing the level of education of teachers, kids, students, and adults. The team cooperates with Trnava city, the regional municipality, teachers at Trnava Universities that make research for them. (lifestarter.sk)

- Edupoint - point of meeting, inspiring and learning for teachers prepared to make systematic changes in education from the bottom (in cooperation with Pontis Generation 3.0 mentioned above)
- Učiteľ 21 (Teacher 21) - courses increasing digital literacy of teachers
- Podcast focused on school teaching, workplace learning, adult and senior education
- Učiaci sa Trnava - educational festival, strategy for whole life learning. The goal is to connect all local actors in education - from schools and universities to hobby and cultural organizations - in order to jointly create a vision for the development of education in Trnava.
- Cukrovar Point - preparing old spaces of sugar producer for cultural and community centres.

After formal education people (not only):

Holis

Holis Summer School is a multidisciplinary international project that supports the creation of social innovations through collaboration and collective intelligence. It designs and

facilitates workshops and positive impact programmes “in the field” - real local communities with a focus on solving the issues of a society in a certain region or for a certain group of people by bringing together professionals from a wide range of disciplines. Recently the group realized a project for Early Child Development providing solutions for Spišský Hrhov (out of the region) weareholis.org/blog/the-pre-preschool One of the team members is a teacher from Slovak Technical University in Bratislava Michaela Lipková. (weareholis.org)

BeTheChange managed by **Coworking Cvernovka**

Activities and value brought by the organisation are described in the chapter on Social Inclusion. A social innovation education and mentoring programme designed for young people aged 18-26 with a focus on social entrepreneurship, strengthening their business skills, developing their personal preconditions, gaining mentoring from successful Slovak entrepreneurs and receiving the necessary support to implement their innovative ideas. (coworkingcvernovka.sk/bethechange/)

Akadémia sociálnej ekonomiky (Academy of Social Economy established by the Foundation of Slovenská sporiteľňa of Erste) providing education, news and inspiration in social entrepreneurship. (akademiase.sk)

“Akadémia vzdelávania a výskumu v sociálnych službách” (AVVSS), translates as Academy of Education and Research in Social Services.

AVVSS was created by organizations with a rich background in social services, as a reaction to the existing need for an educational institution that would fulfill the requirements and needs of social services in practice. The founding organizations perceive low practical and managerial skill levels of professional workers and managers in social services in Slovakia and provide a solution. AVVSS was built upon real-life needs of clients and members of the founding organizations and the institution specializes in educational programmes that are attendable alongside employment. AVVSS offers individualized approaches to various types of social service providers / clients (seniors, people with diseases, people with mental or physical disabilities). It provides the MBA study (Master of Business Administration) programme which is a master's degree programme in vocational education, internationally recognized degree in management education, in 2 fields - Management of social services and Controlling and counseling in social services. AOPSS is a tool for its members to work together and stress the need for increasing the quality of their working environment and simultaneously the quality of life of their clients. (aopss.sk/)

Three Coins

Three Coins offers traditional training (workshops) and digital solutions ranging from an online smart phone app and an e-learning platform to board games with the aim of increasing financial literacy of persons from various backgrounds in Austria. All target groups are served with tailor-made products – 60% of clients are people under 40 (with no special vulnerabilities), 30% are under 18 and 5-5% are women and immigrants. In addition, various consultancy activities (financial literacy workshops, strategy, project support and management) are delivered to commercial clients such as banks, commercial companies, insurance organisations. (threecoins.org/en/)

6.5 Potential cross-border solutions for Slovakia and Austria

The interviewees seem to agree that some key problems and challenges in both countries are basically similar. Social enterprises still need to catch up in the area of entrepreneurial, critical thinking and soft skills needed for success on the labour market, foster equality for underrepresented vulnerable groups (MRCs in Slovakia and migrants in Austria in particular) and develop and enhance the use of new methods and practices also with the help of digital tools. Along these areas there is room for business development in the form of cross-border cooperation.

In the field of education, the implementation of cross-border approaches naturally depends heavily on the legal framework and the respective financing models. Language barriers must also not be neglected. If the framework conditions are clarified, cross-border cooperation can be envisaged. Synergies could be generated in the area of knowledge transfer (know-how) and scaling in the form of joint projects.

In general, innovation in education requires action on multiple fronts (methodology development and testing, impact measurement, implementation aid for both teachers and schools, school situation assessment).

There are many methodologies that have been created and tested by small scale (many times nonprofit) organizations. It is worth incorporating these methodologies into all schools while using innovative financial instruments such as Social Impact Bond.

The above mentioned entities interviewed represent good practice cases and pilot solutions for issues present in the education area. Scaling of several solutions they provide to other regions, schools or educational centres would help to boost the educational sector from the bottom and bring the quality and practical approach used in education.

6.5.1 Pontis (Generacia 3.0) (foundation)

Generácia 3.0 is a solution strengthening the much-needed **practical education** in Slovakia, which can be of use to further develop the dual vocational education and training system in Austria. Innovative learning approaches and educational projects are launched by NPOs or other private entities to teach students or older persons how to become social entrepreneurs with the active involvement of the education community (e.g. Pontis foundation has a working relationship with Lifestarter Trnava educational hub collaborating with the universities in the city of Trnava). In this sense, Generácia 3.0 also provides a crucial link between businesses (profit orientation) and education institutions and their staff.

The adaptability of the various formats currently running in Slovakia (e.g. EDUcamp, EDUakcelerátor, EDUmapa, EDUpoint) should be assessed in Austria from a financial and legal point-of-view, taking into account the focus on different target groups and the divergent educational needs and systemic conditions. The impact measurement of such a solution is essential to guarantee its further uptake.

6.5.2 SchuBu

SchuBu is a freshly started social innovation in Austria where the formal school curricula in different subjects (currently mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology, geography, and German) are offered through a really simple, easy-to-use web platform to children aged 10-14. The aim is to foster the use of **novel digital methods** in the education system and make children familiar with such tools in a fun way as early as possible. Such a solution would be much needed in Slovakia too where the use and application of digital tools and state-of-the-art technologies is still lagging behind.

There are several factors key to a successful adaptation, e.g. cooperation with schools serving as pilot cases (which is already successfully ongoing in Austria), a reliance on dependable school infrastructure (internet and other IT facilities which might require public investment), willingness from the political side and from the education community to adopt such methods and techniques. Nonetheless, the basic idea can be adapted in Slovakia without bigger problems since a formal school curriculum is also given which can be digitalised to a gamified platform.

Another aim of SchuBu is to mitigate the impact of socio-economic background on the performance of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and thus increase the equity of the (primary) education system in Austria; this links SchuBu and similar digital solutions with the next point on „inequity“.

6.5.3 MoleMental

One of the biggest issues with the education system in both Slovakia and Austria is that it does not offer the **same chances for success** and learning outcomes for students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, in particular in our examples for students from marginalised Roma communities (MRCs) in Slovakia or with migration backgrounds in Austria. The initial disadvantage of children (their socio-economic background) strongly determines their educational performance from primary school, which is not mitigated enough by the formal education system. While counteracting this phenomenon would require more extensive (systematic) changes, social enterprises may still contribute to achieving a more equal education by introducing such solutions as SchuBu or MoleMental.

MoleMental has a unique learning offer called „smart box“ (die schlaue Box in German) providing children with specifically designed tools to achieve a barrier-free access to education, thus supporting children with disabilities in increasing their learning outcomes. This method helps integrate children with disabilities into the formal learning processes from an early age on, thus hindering the initial development of an education environment with unequal chances. For other target groups such as migrants (the most disadvantaged group in Austria), related projects have already been launched at smaller scales, e.g. the Centre for Social Innovation (one of the SEED-Hub project partners) actively supports migrant training through innovative projects such as „YMCB – Young migrants capacity building“ (ymcb.eu/) or MENT – Migrant entrepreneurship supported by mentors“ (mentproject.eu/).

The above-mentioned solutions provide students with practical skills mostly missing in (primary) education, thus enhancing the level of critical thinking already needed at such an early age. This feature links these solutions with the next point on „missing skills“.

6.5.4 Three coins

As OECD statistics show and our interviews confirm, the formal education systems in both countries do not provide students with essential „soft“ capacities and skills required for success in the 21st century labour market. Such missing or underdeveloped skills include critical thinking, business-orientation, communication, presentation or networking. Social enterprises have a chance to fill this gap by introducing novel solutions aimed at capacity- and skills-building.

The learning and practice of these skills is beneficial at each education stage, early on from primary school to VET, complementing the formal education system with various offers tailor-made to the needs of the given generation under the local conditions. Therefore, a careful and thorough needs assessment and definition of target groups, as well as the potential collaboration with education and/or financial institutions is of utmost importance when adopting such solutions in new countries.

One such Austrian project feasible for adaptation in Slovakia is three coins, a social enterprise aimed at increasing the level of financial literacy knowledge for (younger) adults. Three coins has an offer of training workshops, as well as more advanced digital solutions (e.g. app and online platform). All target groups are served with tailor-made products – 60% of clients are people under 40, 30% are students under 18 and 5-5% are women and immigrants. Three coins is unique in the sense that its training offers combine solutions for several systematic problems in Austria: it provides practical and missing (financial) knowledge and builds up related capacities, supports the use of digital solutions in education and is partly aimed at people with disadvantaged background.

Since financial literacy is still not properly taught in post-Communist countries such as Slovakia and there is a general lack of (even basic) financial and business skills among the adult population, therefore the need for projects such as three coins could be even higher in Slovakia than in Austria.

In addition to the three key social challenges above, a short summary is given below for two more areas that were also deemed increasingly relevant but do not necessarily align with the main areas detailed. The two areas have already gained relevance in one part of the cross-border region (in case of cultural and creative industries, in Vienna and Bratislava; and in case of food industry and gastronomy in Burgenland) and are improving in significance in the other parts of the region. Therefore their inclusion signals potential future trends in social entrepreneurship (focus areas, thematic priorities) in the cross-border region.

7 Cultural and Creative Industries

7.1 Problem Definition

Based on interviews with two stakeholders from Austria and three stakeholders from Slovakia, cultural and creative industries (CCI) can play a role by providing socially innovative solutions mainly to two of three identified areas, which are a) social inclusion with a focus on social housing and community building and b) inclusive education.

Summarizing major hints of the interviews, there is a couple of challenges and trends relevant to all regions:

- There is a lack of entrepreneurial knowledge regarding business plan development, forecast modeling, distribution networks, and intellectual property protection
- There is a lack of proper infrastructure; often, the creative person also bears entrepreneurial responsibility as a sole proprietor within a loose network of collaborators and competitors
- In case of community-based projects different interests and capacities of volunteers, the public and financing partners and beneficiaries have to be taken into consideration
- There are problems gaining access to financing, to manage cash flow etc. as social and socio-cultural impact is not a leading key figure in the world of business (see also Section “Common Challenges”)

7.2 Environment

There is growing interest in the role of culture and creativity in relation to social innovation and its own role in economic and social development. Cultural social entrepreneurship (CSE) is a rather new label for various approaches and job (or expert) profiles working in the profit and non-profit context. Such enterprises and related institutions are gaining in relevance in particular in greater metropolitan areas (such as Bratislava and Vienna) where they are linked with re-urbanisation and public space transformation processes with the aim of community-building and heritage conservation. The novel innovative roles assumed by such urban sites make sense from economic, social and environmental perspective and it can be assumed that interest will grow in more rural communities (in other parts of the cross-border region) for such types of solutions.

7.3 Interviews

Imagine (Slovakia)

The company focuses on residential projects. In this context, they explore new forms of housing, its connection with work, housing of the third age, co-housing high lightening the social dimension in housing: how it affects the quality of our lives, the environment or climate change:

Mayer is a project of a new, multifunctional district, which needs to be integrated into the city and the surrounding country - physically, socially and environmentally. The projects put a focus on autonomy considering the future effects of the climate crisis. To do so new technologies and approaches that will enable the economical use of resources in the area are implemented. The goal is to create a healthy, lively and attractive district in Malacky, which attracts a diverse range of people who see meaning in a healthy and sustainable way of life. The neighbourhood is designed as a place of sharing and active community life. (imaginehome.eu/sk/o-nas; mayer.imaginehome.eu/)

Spiace miesta (Slovakia)

Making use of unused buildings. Connecting old-building owners with potential content providers. Rental of disused buildings for civic associations, cultural and creative organizations and industry through the active connection of communities and building owners. (spiacemiesta.sk/)

Nová Cvernovka (Slovakia)

SEED-Hub partner Sociálni inovatori helped to bring to life to this project by writing a business plan and bringing financing: Nová Cvernovka is a cultural and creative center located in a former chemical school in Bratislava–Nové Mesto. In addition to multifunctional spaces, an outdoor terrace, a stage, a community garden, public park, children's playground and a public library, there are 132 art and creative studios. This area provides a wide range of cultural and educational programs in the fields of music, fine arts, literature, film, theater and multi-genre activities. There is also a bar (Skrytý bar), bistro (Dvanásť Duší) and café (Giraffe Bakery) with seating indoors or on the terrace in the park. The ground floor houses retail, where there are original graphics, toys, designer jewelry, and slow fashion clothing – Artattack shop & room, People on Earth – FRL, Čierne diary, Živávlina, Mile, Lebo Mäďved', Atelier Oval. (novacvernovka.eu)

Punkt (Slovakia)

The NGO is an initiator of many activities and brings sustainable ideas for inclusive cities. It connects the professionals and public in order to improve the environment in the cities. It has founded a Platforma o ľuďoch a mestách (Platform about people and cities ctzn.punkt.sk), a critical online platform for architecture and urbanism, environmental issues, participatory processes and sustainable development. It cooperates also with the Spiace mesta (Sleeping towns - see paragraph above). Among the most recent is a project of reconstruction and revitalization of the Pálffy manor in Malacky with the aim to create from the manor house a cultural and community space that would provide quality conditions for spending valuable time for both inhabitants of Malacky and visitors from all over the region. A similar organisation interviewed in Vienna is Eutropian. (punkt.sk)

Eutropian (Austria)

Eutropian is an Austrian organisation engaged in similar activities as Punkt. Eutropian provides support with advocacy, research and policy to support inclusive urban processes. Eutropian is involved in 'phase 0' of planning (before the master planning begins) with mostly consulting activities to facilitate the vision of urban regeneration sites through respecting the more 'social' part of planning. The social challenge tackled by Eutropian is to appropriate space, to develop creative industries or make community spaces financially feasible even if they do not have starting capital. They have also been active in Bratislava since their foundation, e.g. through the purpose re-invention of the Old Market Hall (Stará Triz'nica). (eutropian.org)

KAT- Kreativwirtschaft Austria

KAT is an Austria-wide interest group closely connected to the Chamber of Commerce specifically established for (social) enterprises engaged in cultural and creative industries. It offers its services to about 44.000 such organisations through various services, creating crossover effects for innovation, business and society (due to the nature of business, most of these organisations are located within the Vienna region). These services include among others business coaching, creative business workshops, webinars, matchmaking workshops and a database used to document new concepts, creative ideas, products and services before patent registration. (kreativwirtschaft.at/)

Other creative and cultural communities within the regions:

[Arta](#) in Piešťany - a new creative and cultural space in the Trnava region in the development phase. Recently officially rented and partially financed by a bank.

7.4 Potential cross-border solutions for Slovakia and Austria

The following general findings condense arguments based on stakeholder interviews from the border regions in Slovakia and Austria as to the mutual benefit of CSEs: CSEs can generate market demand for their goods and services while also contributing to the dynamic shift in cultural sustainability, social justice, and (social) economic development. Many projects in Slovakia and Austria are rooted in site-specific initiatives focusing on community-based needs sourced by public funding – and more often by volunteer work. One major issue – covered in most of the interviews - is the lack of access to financing for cultural social businesses, despite growing evidence that this “in-between” sector could potentially offer more resilient, inclusive, and environmentally viable paths to economic recovery or regional development (see also Section “Common Challenges”).

The interview with Gerin Trautenberger, a leading CCI representative of the Austrian Chamber of Commerce, gave visibility to a general restraint of the market-orientated sectors towards social and cultural entrepreneurship. To overcome this, a deeper analysis,

on the one hand, of the value for the market and, on the other hand, of social impact and the SDGs in relation to CSEs could help to make assets traceable. Against this background, there are concrete entry points for cultural social entrepreneurs to become active and design products and services with social impact for the border regions.

8 Food Industry and Gastronomy

8.1 Problem Definition

In the thematic area of gastronomy/food, food waste was identified as the most important area where, in our view, the greatest need for action with the greatest impact is to be expected. Products are not needed due to overproduction, wrong production times, etc. and are disposed of. This leads to high disposal costs and waste of resources. In order to create a more sustainable approach to food waste, there are many ways to deal with it, for example by reintegrating the products back into the value chain.

8.2 Environment

The target groups are seen differently by the interviewees. Those companies and organisations that link food waste with poverty reduction see their target group primarily in this area. These can be, for example, people who receive the minimum pension, single parents or students, generally people experiencing poverty. When focusing on the waste of resources as well as the sustainable cultivation of food, the target groups are somewhat more broadly defined. People with an interest in sustainable products, but also companies that want to buy products for their employees.

The sectors of the companies are consistently characterized by a connection to (food) trade. The majority of the companies and organizations see no or little comparable and direct competition in their sector. The offers are also seen as a complement in the field of sustainability and less as competition. The societal/social impact brought about by social enterprises and related stakeholders in the food industry sector primarily are visible in the implementation of the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's):

SDG 1 No poverty

SDG 2 No hunger

SDG 10 Less inequality

SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities

SDG 12 Sustainable consumption and production

SDG 13 Climate protection measures

The social enterprises aim to promote sustainable consumption and production and reduce inequalities, hunger and poverty. The goal is to ensure and expand awareness that food is a valuable commodity. The relevant activities to achieve this goal range from the reintegration of unneeded food into the value chain to the sustainable production of food.

Another focus was on the social inclusion of people experiencing poverty (providing a significant link to thematic area 2). They can be better integrated through affordable food and the financial burden is reduced.

8.3 Interviews

NGO Gertrud (Simone Biegler)

NGO Gertrud is an association that wants to bring people in Austria out of loneliness and let them participate in a business. Coffee from sustainable, organic cultivation is imported from Tanzania and sold in coffee houses. It is important that the plantation workers are paid fairly and that the coffee is of high quality. (kaffeeprojekt.com/meicoffee)

Soo gut

Soogut markets can currently be found in Lower Austria and in the north of Burgenland. Sustainable social markets are operated that make an ecological and socio-political contribution. Soogut stands for resource-saving and price-conscious shopping. High-quality food and everyday goods are offered at low prices. The aim is to take a clear stand against the throwaway society. On the one hand, unused resources are redistributed, which also saves industry and trade high disposal costs, and on the other hand, opportunities are created for people at risk of poverty to buy everyday necessities at a favorable price. (soogut.at/ueber-soogut)

Pannonische Tafel

The vision of the Pannonische Tafel is that all people have the right to a good life and limited opportunities for public participation. A fair distribution of goods is a prerequisite for this. The Pannonische Tafel addresses food waste and sees itself as a bridge between economic abundance and scarcity. The Pannonische Tafel offers low-income people the opportunity to receive food for a contribution towards costs. The food from industry and trade is collected by volunteers and brought to the "Food Corner" of the Pannonische Tafel. (pannonischetafel.com/)

Bionana

Bionana stands for organic, natural and sustainable living. The company's mission is to make the biological diversity of organic plants available again. Rare and old plant varieties are recultivated and sold alongside other practical and sustainable products. Only biodegradable packaging material is also used for the packaging. The plant seeds are

packed in environmentally friendly grass paper. All sustainability criteria are met. (bionana.shop/)

Unverschwendet

The company was founded in 2016 and offers a solution against food waste of fruit and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables are thrown away for various reasons: too big, too small, ripe at the wrong time, wrong colour, surplus quantities, etc. These quantities of fruit and vegetables are saved and used to produce other products such as jams, syrups, chutneys, sauces, etc. The products are distributed via the web shop, in food retail shops and to companies. (unverschwendet.at/)

Bivio (Slovakia)

The mission of the organisation is to socially integrate vulnerable groups of people with mental disabilities into life and work. It has established a social enterprise providing the services of hotel, restaurant and laundry. (The mission is to socially integrate vulnerable groups of people with mental disabilities into life and work. (bivio.sk/sk/))

8.4 Potential cross-border solutions for Slovakia and Austria

The social enterprises interviewed assume that the situation in Austria and Slovakia is comparable. There is a general weakness about available funding in both countries, which makes the operation of commercial and not-for-profit entities dependent on voluntary work.

The main sources of income for the social enterprises are the products sold in the B2C and B2B sectors. The most important source of funding, apart from the proceeds from business activities, was also mentioned as subsidies, but also alternative sources of income such as crowdfunding or food donations. A large cost factor is personnel costs, but also logistics costs. Investments are made when possible. The teams of social enterprises are mostly small and focus on the most essential positions. As mentioned, often the companies and organisations also work with volunteers.

The inherent risk related to financing and investment means a more complicated planning process for stakeholders in this sector (than in other social entrepreneurship areas). This entails that the demand for organic food or the reduction of food waste must be examined in advance to develop a feasible business model. The business models are transferable, but face potential challenges. There is a need for clarification of different standards in food law, especially regarding legal framework conditions.

A significant opportunity is the increased individuality to meet the needs of the customers. The social enterprises also see a great opportunity for cross-border potential in networking and the exchange of experience. In this way, well-working business models can be shared and discussed too. For a sustainable cooperation, the know-how of the partners is essential

as well as a common understanding of the corporate philosophy. Products can also be exchanged and access opened up for both countries.

Sectoral strengths on which such a mutually beneficial cross-border collaboration can be built on include the strong personal commitment visible in the sector (involved actors are 'proud' of their products and contributions to green aims), the sectoral knowledge (which – from an agricultural point-of-view – is similar in both countries) and chances for individualization (in terms of products, services, processes).

9 Common Challenges for All Areas

9.1 Financing issues connected with social enterprises

9.1.1 Problem Definition

Based on the interviews and the secondary research conducted, including results stemming from other projects such as CERUSI (mentioned in Section "Social Inclusion") several barriers connected with financing the social enterprises and reaching their economic sustainability were identified:

- Social entrepreneurs often have insufficient experience with sustainable fundraising, and are ignorant of the possibility of using refundable financial resources from financial institutions, specifically focused on social economy entities.
- The traditional setting of social economy financing is in many cases limited to the public budget and is underfunded (in particular in Slovakia), not only in terms of finance, but also in terms of human capital and expertise. In Austria, a shift towards ensuring more private and sustainable funding is visible among start-ups (new, more individually-driven social enterprises) often funded and managed by more business-oriented social entrepreneurs, but this change of mindset is limited and have not until now changed the funding mix of „traditional“ NPOs and cooperatives mainly relying on public subsidies and contracts.
- Strong dependence of social enterprises to grant financing, which does not ensure the sustainability of the social enterprise in the long run. Many companies devote a lot of time and energy to obtaining short-term grants, and underestimate the issue of long-term economic sustainability. In the case of socio-economic enterprises in Austria, central or federal state funding is provided only for a limited time partly due to budgetary constraints, which makes planning complicated.
- Insufficient communication of the value of social enterprises towards financial institutions. Entrepreneurs do not know how to develop and subsequently present a project so that it is understandable and economically or financially sustainable for a financial institution (this issue is strongly connected with the lacking skills towards data collection and application – see challenge on „data mining“ in this Section).
- The ecosystem of stakeholders is fragmented and there is a lack of connections / interactivity between actors in the social economy, with entities often focusing on

only one impact or location or one source of funding, which hinders their development.

9.1.2 Solutions

- Use of hybrid financing (refundable and non-refundable) rather than relying purely only on grant schemes or public subsidies. Gradually replace the use of grant funding for solvers of social problems with innovative financial instruments such as Social Impact Bonds, respectively results-oriented contracting, which aims at the effective use of financial and human capacities to address challenges.
- Use of various innovative financial tools applicable in the impact sector, such as quasi-equity, mezzanine, social impact bond, etc. from ethical investors / banks.
- Impact measurement is one way of communicating the value the enterprise brings to a society. Financial institutions and other sources of capital contributions are more willing to finance them due to clearly defined and measured impact. A cooperation with academic and education institutions might be a solution in this regard – see challenge on “data mining” in this Section.
- There is a need for capacity building on the market. Bringing more professionals to impact finance is a must.
- Direct award of contracts to social enterprises (social procurement) is a more appropriate way to ensure their economic sustainability compared to obtaining grants.

9.2 Networking and interest representation of social enterprises

9.2.1 Problem Definition

- Social enterprises – in particular the smaller ones – are not aware of the similar ideas, projects or organisations in their related field and thus cannot exchange knowledge and practices among themselves, or build up a "critical mass" of organisations needed for successful lobbying towards policy-makers or funding organisations, such as public bodies or commercial banks
- Networking specifically maintained for social enterprises should be enhanced: until recently, there were no networking associations specifically aimed at social entrepreneurs either in Austria or in Slovakia. SENA (Social Entrepreneurship Network Austria) and ASES (Alliance for Social Economy in Slovakia) have both recently been launched to fill this gap
- Due to the lack of specific legal form of social enterprises in Austria, networking is fragmented with many umbrella organisations operating in various sectors (Sozialwirtschaft Österreich for social and health service providers), for various legal forms (arbeit plus for WISEs) or in various territorial units (Social City Wien for Vienna) A further fragmentation in Austria is due to the federal nature of state organisation, resulting in differences of the strength and quality of networking and interest representation among federal states

- The networking – and related interest representation – of social enterprises and entrepreneurs is in its infancy in Slovakia and needs harmonisation and centralisation in Austria
- Networking is even more successful when the Austrian or Slovakian umbrella and interest representation organisations are part of an international entity, which is often not the case; there are some notable exceptions such as Ashoka or arbeit plus (see below at „Solutions“)

9.2.2 Solutions

Successful networking initiatives (e.g. prizes and awards, such as Sozial Marie) and organisations should be fostered in both countries, and successful Austrian examples could be adapted in Slovakia. The following Austrian umbrella organisations could be of particular interest in the Slovak context too:

1. **Social Entrepreneurship Network Austria** (acting as a strategic partner within the project)

SENA is a networking association and, on the other hand, an interest representation organisation of Austrian social entrepreneurs. In its first capacity, SENA serves as a contact point for social entrepreneurs, enhances their visibility, strives to break down barriers, improve their financing situations and encourage young people to get into the social business. This is achieved by information provision, consultation, training, mentoring and coaching activities where the interested members can get better acquainted with the legal framework for social enterprises (legal structures), the funding mechanisms and opportunities (both public and private) – webinars and workshops are regularly organised in different relevant topics, with the involvement of external parties too.

SENA is an association whose main revenue source is membership fees. In addition, additional revenues are provided by cooperation partners (e.g. EY, aws, FFG, Ashoka, impact hub) and supporting partners (e.g. Erste Foundation, business angels) (a full list is available on SENA's website) and through projects, e.g. the TASKFORCOME Interreg Central Europe project financing the Sustainable Impact Academy, and studies, such as the Social Entrepreneurship Monitor Österreich 2020. For the membership fee, the members get courses for free or at a discounted rate and, at the same time, increase their commitment in becoming active members in the network (sena.or.at).

2. **Arbeit plus** (acting as a strategic partner within the project)

Arbeit plus is a network consisting of 200 non-profit, labour market oriented Social Integration Enterprises (SIE) providing jobs and training places as well as counselling, care and support to people disadvantaged on the labour market (e.g. long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, girls and women, young people, the elderly, migrants, people with addictions or those released from prison). Arbeit plus provides its members with a set of supporting measures, among others coordination of the exchange of information, consultation and advice, interest representation, development and quality assurance of

concepts and projects, public relations, cooperation with international and European networks. In addition, special services include a seal of approval for social enterprises, a database representing Austrian social enterprises, and an innovation lab for experimentation where social enterprises with labour market policy actors can experiment around an employment or labour market topic.

Member organisations employ long-term unemployed and receive funding by the labour market service. Arbeit plus is levy funded, which means that about 1 percent of the wages of beneficiaries (of those temporarily employed) goes to arbeit plus. Furthermore, arbeit plus receives funding from international / European projects. Arbeit plus is a member of the international umbrella organisation „European Network of Social Integration Enterprises“ (ENSIE) (arbeitplus.at/)

9.3 Data mining, lack of data and ability to work with them

9.3.1 Problem Definition

- There is a lack of data on the basis of which relevant and effective solutions to societal problems can be set, or social entrepreneurs do not have enough information about where to find such data.
- Social entrepreneurs often do not have the skills and ability to work with existing data needed for calculating social or economic benefits of their ideas, projects or organisations.
- Calculations of the value of social impact are often missing or cannot be convincingly presented to public and private funding bodies.
- Measurable parameters of positive impact are often missing in the planning or implementation stages.

9.3.2 Solutions

- There should be an enhanced cooperation between social enterprises and non-profit organisations or educational institutions well-versed in data analysis. Such a collaboration would be especially beneficial for social entrepreneurs formalising their initial ideas and start-ups trying to obtain funding. State and public bodies should consider financing or otherwise supporting such close cooperation at an early stage of project development.

Two organisations (from both sides of the border) that can be of interest to social enterprises in terms of data analysis:

1. Alvaria

The civic association as a spin off project from Finstat (data mining company) brings together a team of analysts, programmers, junior researchers and experts who have several years of experience in several ways - from processing and visualizing data from state registers, product development and management, through community and volunteer involvement in IT solutions development, to public policy making. in the field of open data at national and local level. Their mission is to bring individuals and public institutions

together to uncover the potential of data, identify societal challenges and solutions, turn ideas into concrete results, and initiate positive societal change. They focus on connecting different innovation and technology-oriented communities into a functional platform for exchanging the processing of publicly available open data.

2. NPO and Social Competence Centre

The Competence Centre for Non-profit Organisations and Social Entrepreneurship (NPO & SE Competence Centre) is a unit of the Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU) and has a dedicated team for social entrepreneurship. Its mission is to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange between academy and practice by carrying out data-related research activities for NPOs and social enterprises, such as benchmarking, evaluations and assessments, SROI analysis).

Based on our interviews, successful cooperation is already ongoing between social enterprises and academic institutions in several cases in Austria. The following examples can serve as inspiration for adaptation in Slovakia:

- The **NPO & SE Competence Centre** made a comprehensive Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of **dahir** in 2017 and found that dahir's SROI was around 4.73. This means that every EUR invested in dahir creates EUR 4.73 in monetary terms. The study detailed the profits achieved by tenants, owners and employees of dahir. (the study is available here: wu.ac.at/npocompetence/projekte/2019/sroi-dahir)
- **TU Berlin** supports the measurement of the social impact of **AfB** by a set of different indicators, such as ecological effects (of reuse), water, energy and CO2 saved, the established working place for people with disabilities, etc. The concrete numbers are basically available on AfB's website or can be checked at the company's press releases and sustainability reports.
- Using internal and external resources, **Silver Living** makes a biannual market report for senior living for better assessing the market around assisted living because, as in contrast to other areas of living, statistics on this age group are largely lacking in Austria. Within the framework of the market report, an extensive survey was conducted, which resulted in an analysis of the current situation, as well as a database of existing assisted and sheltered housing facilities and nursing homes. In addition, demographic developments, such as changes in income or housing situation or mobility among senior citizens, as well as topics such as "living in a nursing home" were also examined. As a conclusion, the market opportunities for assisted living were summarised.
- **Alterslust** developed and provides its community helpers with a digital tool to measure impacts of the organisation's solutions for the whole community and the individual citizens. The organisation can thus calculate the social and financial added value – based on their calculation, there is a social return on investment of at least 1:1.5 (all invested EUR brings forth at least 1.5 EUR).
- **Three coins** performs a tailor-made impact evaluation for each of the company's (training) projects, either done by three coins itself (e.g. through surveys or questionnaires) or with the support of external partners, such as the **NPO & SE Competence Centre** in case of the board game developed. For each project, such measures are sought as the number of people reached, how 'deep' they were

involved in activities, etc. In case of indicators, they strive to measure 'behavioural changes', i.e. how conscious you deal with your finances in your daily work.

9.4 Lack of human capacities in social economy

9.4.1 Problem Definition

- Many young or experienced people are interested in working towards social goals but they lack capacities to address concrete societal challenges
- There is a shortage of entrepreneurial skills in the social economy sector, especially among formal providers of social services in the non-profit sector.
- There is a lack of experience and skills of social entrepreneurs in the field of strategic planning, development
- The inadequate education and training system for social entrepreneurs and unexploited existing opportunities for providing education from non-governmental organizations contribute to this problem – this issue is in particular relevant in Slovakia where there is an insufficient connection of students with practical situations in solving social challenges

9.4.2 Solutions

Many organisations aim to complement the formal education system with skills needed for launching and operating a successful and sustainable social enterprise. The following shortlist summarizes the most important such entities from both countries the adoption of which could be useful in the other country or regions:

- **Nexteria** is a Slovak NGO focusing on impact education of the (after)university students and helping them to grow as people ready to make positive changes and solve societal issues, while building a community of active citizens.
- **BeTheChange** programme is a Slovak education and mentoring programme designed for young people aged 18-26. The focus of the programme is on social entrepreneurship where interested participants can strengthen their business skills through training and mentoring from successful Slovak entrepreneurs.
- **Akadémia sociálnej ekonomiky** provides practical education in the field of social entrepreneurship. Since the programme is designed by a foundation of the bank Slovenská sporiteľňa (Erste bank in Austria) therefore it provides the interested participants with much-needed practical financial, administrative and legal knowledge and skills.
- **Pioneers of Change** is an Austrian association providing a full-year training programme designed for social entrepreneurs who need support in implementing their initial ideas with social character. During the training programme, personality development is done in several formats, such as individual coaching, group discussions, and a specific focus is given to project management. Since 2010, 15-20 participants have completed the annual programme. (pioneersofchange.org)
- **Social Impact Award** is an idea competition, coupled with a training programme aimed at students with social entrepreneurship plans. The winners receive a scholarship and a three-month intensive incubation experience, in addition to

workshops on idea generation, business models and similar useful topics. The Vienna University of Economics and Business started the award in 2009, which is now transferred to 17 countries, among them Slovakia. In the previous years it was managed by Impact Hub in Austria. The initiative is a good example of enhancing human capacity in the social economy in both countries through targeted measures. (austria.socialimpactaward.net). The competition will be organized also in Slovakia in 2022 by **Coworking Cvernovka**.

9.5 Strategy-building and systematic change initiation

9.5.1 Problem Definition

- Several issues tackled by social enterprises are so „wicked“ (in the sense that it consists of interrelated problems in social and economic areas) that their mitigation or elimination requires longer-term strategy building.
- While sustainable social enterprises are successful in implementing their original concept and contribute to a more „just“ world through e.g. social services, social inclusion or education activities, much fewer social enterprises strive to focus on longer-term goals and aim to achieve systemic changes in their concrete area.
- More social enterprises should consider initiating a change of mindset in their concrete area, which should manifest in a stronger lobbying position and mutual cooperation with policy-makers at local, regional and state level.

9.5.2 Solutions

The following ways represent “recipes” how to bring and foster the change in a society:

- There are several examples among the interview partners who are not only engaged in achieving a small-scale social innovation solution but also “look at the bigger picture” and aim to initiate changes at a higher (policy) level through e.g. **strategy-building** – their examples should be followed by other social enterprises in both countries. Such organisations include among others **three coins** (initiated the adoption of a national strategy for financial education in 2020), **R.U.S.Z.** (aims to change the entire current economic system through ending planned obsolescence of machines by introducing circular economy and sharing market strategies), **Silver living** (wants to change the perception of elderly people in society), **Wogen** (wants to change the current Austrian housing association system by re-introducing community-led cooperatives), **Volkshilfe** (the Care Leaver mentoring programme strives to change the perception of young disadvantaged persons through a volunteer network) or **Schubu** (aims to change the whole Austrian education concept focusing on “encyclopedic” knowledge through digitalisation). In Slovakia, there are present the following good examples: **Nexteria** (focusing on impact education of the (after)university students and helping them to grow as people ready to make positive changes and solve societal issues), project **Omama** (bringing systematic solution in the are of early child development to decrease poverty in Roma communities), **Generacia 30** is building and managing a platform for “dissemination” of various innovative methods and ways of education.

- Strategy-building and achieving longer-term goals is more efficient if it can rely on well-known and tried-out **international examples and networks**, for instance **Wohnbuddy** cooperates with the international network NESTA, **Jamba** maintains and improves a multi-country online platform network or **Volkshilfe** follows the international „corporate parenting“ principle in its Care Leaver mentoring programme.
- Support from prestigious **awards** may contribute to raising awareness about the social challenges and their solutions among policy-makers in several countries; for instance, **Jamba** won the zero project award given by the ESSL foundation and Ashoka, helping their upscaling process, or **R.U.S.Z.** won many Austrian federal and municipal-level awards, such as the Environmental Award of the City of Vienna or SDG Special Award of the Austrian Senate of Economy, which supported them to achieve their social and ecological goals at policy level. The initiative **IG24** of Simona Ďurišová won in 2020 Social Marie Prize in the area of advocacy for foreign (including Slovak) social caregivers in Austria.
- Such social enterprises are more successful in initiating systematic changes that have a focus on cross-cutting issues encompassing **more social innovation areas**; for instance **R.U.S.Z.** and **AfB Group** contribute to a more inclusive labour market and a greener economy, **dahir** contributes to a better integration of disadvantaged people and maintenance of sustainable cities and communities, or **three coins** helps in general with increasing financial literacy of the population but also supports the capacity-building of migrants and other disadvantaged people. Project **Omama** in Slovakia solves several issues (employment of women in Roma communities, preparing children for education, decreasing poverty and increasing employment in the future).
- **Cooperation with other companies** also helps to reach a „critical mass“ in the lobbying activities towards policy-makers or in the strategy-building process; for instance, **AfB Group** collaborates with foundation Reintegra (economic side + inclusive labour market), **Jamba** cooperates with myability in Austria (online job-finding platforms), or **Hausaktiv** cooperates with Rewe (inclusive labour market)
- **Building communities** is beneficial for change-initiation and strategy-building since a like-minded community requesting socio-economic changes will have a stronger voice towards its elected politicians; for instance **Wogen** (community-led housing), **Alterslust** (community nurses), **dahir** (socio-economic property management) or **Volkshilfe** (volunteer network in the Care Leaver Mentoring programme) all have a strong community-building aspect built into their respective services. Strong community was built by **Združenie na pomoc ľuďom s mentálnym postihnutím** (association helping people with mental disabilities) which provides social services, counselling, advocacy, inclusive employment through **Bivio** (restaurant/hotel/laundry).

10 Best Cases in Slovakia

10.1 YMCA na Slovensku - Community building, Culture centre, Affordable housing, Coworking

YMCA is a non-profit youth organization with a seat in a historical building at Karpatská street in Bratislava and 13 local associations throughout Slovakia providing a variety of programmes and services to meet the changing needs of young people in their local communities. It is the biggest international youth christian organization in the world established in 1844 in London, and after the first world war in 1920 also in Slovakia. It is active in 120 countries.

Between the world wars there was the growth of civic association activities and non-profit organisations in former Czechoslovakia. The number of voluntary associations, clubs and foundations grew significantly. YMCA was one of them. It helped new sports to come to Czechoslovakia (volleyball and basketball). The first self-service canteen was built here.

(Source: ymca.sk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/History-of-Youth-Work-6_ymca_slovakia-1.pdf)

During socialism it was forced to cease its activities. After 1990 it re-initiated its mission.

OBJECTIVE

YMCA creates space and time for the growth and development of young people and the communities in which they live. It unites Christians of different faiths, non-believers, Roma communities, people of different ages in continuity across generations. (Source: ymca.sk)

IMPACT

In Bratislava, it owns a building (8000 m²) with a great potential to realize and further develop more social/impact goals. At present YMCA in Bratislava is renting the spaces to companies organizing various cultural activities, however it works on redesign and more impactful content of events in the future. Accommodation facilities are used at minimal level. After the planned reconstruction it would be able to use the accommodation spaces more effectively and provide them as affordable housing of 35 small flats for groups of vulnerable people, e.g. children from orphanages. In addition to that, the impact will be realized also through the administration facilities provided to social or impact organizations, including the coworking spaces.

We see YMCA as a community and culture space, facility for affordable accommodation, and impact coworking.

One example of [events](#) supported by YMCA.

BUSINESS MODEL AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

After many years of no investment the building incurred a 30-year investment debt. At present the company is setting the strategy goals with the aim to become a hub making impact in the main three areas - culture, housing and work. Despite the fact that the organization develops economic activity, it is necessary to develop the business model further towards long-term financial sustainability and increase revenues. At present it uses a hybrid revenue model - 348k EUR in 2019 of which more than half is made by subsidies and less than one third by revenues from the rent. To make the building sustainable from financial and impact points of view requires a huge and complex reconstruction, for which it is necessary to look for financial resources in a hybrid structure - grants and ethical financial institutions providing repayable resources.

10.2 AfB Group - Inclusive employment, environment

IMPACT

AfB is Europe's largest social enterprise for the recovery of used IT hardware focused on refurbishing and selling computer equipment while employing people with disabilities. It is a multinational company active in Germany, Slovakia, Austria, France and Switzerland with an Eastern European branch in Trnava in Slovakia.

BUSINESS MODEL AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

It takes over discarded hardware from its partner companies and, after certified deletion of stored data, modifies it so that it can be used again. For instance, in Austria the refurbishment process follows all relevant legal requirements and standards, i.e. workers provide for data security, certify and test the newly re-assembled machines, etc. This prolongs its life cycle, saves natural resources and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. The business model is economically self-sustainable. Its target group is mainly the B2B segment. For B2C target the eshop in the process of preparation.

The company is financially backed by the mother company. One of its investors is BonVentures, an ethical institutional investor.

The Slovak branch has become a registered social enterprise under the Slovak Law which regulates social economy and its players on the market. The Law on social economy, especially the part on social procurement and reduced VAT on 10% for social enterprises, is not working properly and sufficiently. In Slovakia many supporting structures – from the side of the regions or the state – are missing that are already common in Austria. For instance, in Austria there is support from the state in the form of social procurement by the state rather than subsidies.

The Slovak branch employs 14 people plus Marek Antonak as CEO, of which 11 people are working in “production”. The capacity of the centre is up to 50 employees. The investment realized gives prerequisites for the Trnava branch to become a Central European distribution centre. The experience from Austria shows that certain functions within the

company can be centralised, such as marketing, bookkeeping, HR, but others should be left at local level, such as production of acquisition of new partners and networking. The latter ones are the one that should be focused on when establishing the distribution centre in Trnava.

AfB in Slovakia could become one of the first companies to apply the Social Impact Bond to reach the goal of digitalisation of lower income families and communities.

10.3 EduHub - Innovative education

PROBLEM

As identified above, among major social economic challenges in the regions, especially in Slovakia, are also the lack of human capacity to address societal issues and insufficient connection of students with practical situations in solving social challenges. In general, the state education program does not prepare students for practical life and the capacity building is at a low level.

OBJECTIVE

EduHub is an initiative of three entities active in impact education. Its goal is to create a hub of ideas and activities of common focus on education, education start-ups, education innovations and technologies. All three entities were interviewed:

Edulienka (innovative elementary school aiming at the personal and social development of the child, supporting personal development that allows the child to acknowledge his/her own capabilities, opportunities, limits,

Pontis (foundation changing education so that children are not just passive recipients of knowledge, but the ability to solve challenges of the society) with its educational program Generacia 3.0, seeking innovative learning approaches, linking them with the education community, helping them with an effective setup, and supports their dissemination to schools across Slovakia,

Coworking Cvernovka (coworking space connected with a child care club, bringing together freelancers, artists, non-profit organizations, social enterprises and small businesses under one roof while providing various educational programs for them).

IMPACT

EduHub will provide a wide mix of innovative educational and entrepreneurial approaches and activities realized at one place where entities can benefit from each other's impact as described above.

BUSINESS MODEL AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

At present the EduHub project is in the process of creating and setting up the structure of renting the common space in an existing school building in Bratislava offered for a lease. The team of Sociálni inovátori manages the process of communication between all stakeholders: owner of the building, entities renting the space, architects, and the city of Bratislava, including preparing a financial structure of the project and the assessment of its financial sustainability.

10.4 Andreas, n.o. - Social services for people with autism

PROBLEM

Only some children with autism achieve independent living in adulthood during intensive care. It depends on the degree of autism and occurrence of associated disorders, as well as the form of therapy. In most cases, however, the prognosis in adulthood remains poor which means a growing need for help and specific care for the whole life.

OBJECTIVE

Andreas is a nonprofit organization established by parents addressing the issue of social care of people with autism spectrum. It has created a growing community of parents and professionals specialising in care for people with autism. It has become a regional centre of autism for the Bratislava self-governing region.

In most Slovak regions there is a complete absence of qualified, professional staff. There is only one 24hour/7day stay facility specialized on people with autism in the Trenčín region (Drahuškovo) barely being financially sustainable, relying on state subsidies, which are not sufficient. The number of people with autism in Slovakia is significantly growing and reaching an estimate of about 35.000 patients.

IMPACT

Andreas is active in the following areas:

- special social counseling focused on social prevention
- education in a special primary school with a kindergarten
- organization of training activities for professionals

Due to the need to address the plight of individual families with an autistic child - comprehensively and for the whole life Andreas wants to face the problem in the following ways:

- provision of lifelong housing, lifelong care and services
- creating a facility that is appropriate to the needs of clients with autism and that can create dignified conditions for their personal growth

- to combine the non-existent cooperation of the three health departments - diagnostics, early intervention, education - preschool development, compulsory school attendance, out-of-school and leisure activities and social counseling and prevention of the consequences of disabilities
- open sheltered workshops and sheltered housing for the centre's clients

(Source: andreas.sk)

BUSINESS MODEL AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Social care of people with autism is provided either in the form of ambulance social counseling or if there is a need a 24hour/7day stay (residential) care is provided through facilities with a wide variety of diagnosis without specialisation on people with autism. Special care of people with autism requires a higher number of social caregivers compared to other social services providers which makes this type of service highly unsustainable assuming the present payments from the state on social services.

At present Andreas is financed mostly by subsidies from the regional municipality and donations which are not sufficient to run a stay care facility.

The main goal of the organization is to build a centre with a lifelong facility that will meet all needs for all age categories of autistic clients and will provide a full social care with the perspective of full compensation of one's own family for dependent individuals. Such an investment into a facility and its operation requires huge financial sources. Payments from state / region are not sufficient to cover even minimal wages of social care givers. A hybrid form of financial structure (grants / refundable) is necessary not only for investment but also for operational expenses.

FUTURE

While finalizing this document, the Trnava regional government is preparing the Strategic Concept (Strategická Koncepcia) 2022-2030, namely SMART conception in the area of social inclusion. Among other measures it plans to build 24/7 stay-care centres in all districts of the region, which means 7 stay (residential) facilities for care of people with autism spectrum.

The Bratislava region is continuously dealing with the topic of social services for people with autism spectrum disorders. The project of establishing a specialized facility for adult autistic people in the Pod hradom in Plavecké Podhradie is currently in the implementation phase. A large project of the Autism Center on Znievská Street in Petržalka is under construction which will provide social services in residential and ambulance form, each for 12 recipients of social services. In the past, the Bratislava region has implemented several projects of specialized facilities for children and youth

10.5 Cesta von / projekt Omama - Early child development

PROBLEM

As many as 87% of the population of marginalized settlements live below the poverty line. This has a great negative impact on children and their development. Being born into communities with bad living conditions leads to health problems accompanied with chronic stress and negative learning opportunities. Since birth, they enter the circle of poverty. In such an unstable environment with insufficient stimulation children do not develop properly and have low vocabulary. This results in their placement in special schools which do not prepare them for further higher education. With this handicap children never reach the level of children with better socio-economic conditions.

- Children are born to generation poverty
- Low stimulation conditions
- Unsuccess in school and life
- Inability to find a job
- Low income
- Very bad housing, health and nutrition conditions

OBJECTIVE

NGO Cesta von (transl. as The way out) is developing the network of women (co called "omamas") from communities where children are born. The NGO trains and mentors them, while providing them with technical support so they (with mothers of children) work with children on a regular basis. Women use unique methods to develop fine and gross motor skills, cognitive abilities, socio-emotional areas, language skills and communication, creativity, resilience, and a healthier lifestyle of children. These abilities need to be developed during the first 1000 days of life to give better prerequisites for development of learning skills in a school.

IMPACT

The project Omama solves several social issues simultaneously:

- Women from communities have jobs and regular working habits (20 hours / week)
- Better readiness of children for school and further life
- Better results of children in schools
- Increased employment

It is proven by several studies that the return on the investment into a human capital is highest in the age of 0-3 years compared to further phases of life (4-5 year, school, adulthood) when the return on this investment is decreasing by the time.

BUSINESS MODEL AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The financial sources for its activities and wages of omamas come mostly from sponsors and donors. The organization is quite successful in fundraising due to its focus on result and impact and the ability to present its value for society in a very well and understandable manner towards donors. NGO plans to expand its Omama's network and organically grow further. It would be reasonable to use the innovative financial instrument Social Impact Bond (result oriented contract) to support the organization and scale the solution throughout the whole country and multiply the impact that could bring major systematic change.

11 Best Cases in Austria

11.1 Silver Living - Social Assistance and Care

PROBLEM

European societies are getting older and people tend to have a longer 'active' life in retirement after finishing their jobs. They might require some assistance and care but do not wish to move into a care home or pay for the full services of a nurse but feasible alternatives are still not provided on the market. Silver Living offers one such alternative in Austria through various forms of assisted living.

OBJECTIVE

Silver Living is the market leader in Austria for privately financed housing for senior citizens. They take care of the whole project cycle of housing solutions with the final aim of providing elderly people with various forms of assisted living. Silver Living provides senior citizens with privately financed housing (assisted living) options in Vienna and Graz. Their focus lies in assisted and sheltered living (40% of their portfolio) but it is complemented by other service property models, e.g. generational living.

IMPACT

The mission of Silver Living is two-fold: on the one hand, they want to create an environment where elderly people can spend the "golden autumn" phase of their lives in a more active and satisfying manner. On the other hand, in a broader sense their mission is 'political': Silver Living aims to bring forward a constant debate on the topic of old age (ageism, i.e. the prejudices and discrimination related to old age) in Austria and strive for a change in society that will initiate a change in attitudes and behaviour.

In order to measure such impact, Silver Living makes a biannual market report. Within this report, an extensive survey is conducted, which results in an analysis of the current situation, as well as a database of existing assisted and sheltered housing facilities and nursing homes. In addition, demographic developments, such as changes in income or housing

situation or mobility among senior citizens, as well as topics such as "living in a nursing home" are also examined. The report concludes with the market opportunities for assisted living.

BUSINESS MODEL AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Silver Living provides a full-service package for housing development and works with real estate developers and care providers together until the flats or houses can be rented out to the customers. A partner or an association (Verein) then takes over the renting process of the established homes and acts as representative towards the customers. The main customers of their housing solutions are senior citizens wanting to spend their life after retirement in a barrier-free environment with services tailor-made to their needs and requirements. In addition, another target group is a set of project developers and municipalities willing to pay for Silver Living's expertise in the form of consulting services.

Silver Living maintains a holistic approach in their provision of services, ranging from planning/project development and construction to marketing, letting and operational management, as well as to property management and investor management. Within this portfolio they offer the following services for interested investors and end-users (elderly people): search for suitable building sites and/or houses, market analysis, concept development, concept planning, supervision, marketing and PR, rental services, operational management, investment management. Silver Living offers tailor-made models to specific needs, acts as an intermediary body between all stakeholders, i.e. regional authorities, financing partners, project partners, real estate agents and property management, as well as drafts regular investment reports (available on their website for impact assessment).

There are several types of business models used according to the legal requirements in each Austrian federal state. In Styria, the freely funded model is the most prevalent (using private investors): the state strongly supports the refurbishment of housing, the funding of real estate development and the residents can get subsidies. In contrast, in Lower Austria grants can only be obtained by non-profit building companies and not companies such as Silver Living.

The main investors are foundations, private investors and real estate investment companies – Silver Living also gets care benefits for investments in rural areas and municipal support during certain investment projects. The company offers such residential products for which the customers (mainly elderly people) are willing to pay a reasonable rent. The selling point is taking care of their needs from the beginning of the projects. The major costs of planning and building residential homes are thus covered in the later stages by investors and end users (customers).

FUTURE

Silver Living intends to bring its solutions to other countries and offer an affordable housing solution to seniors. The firm plans to extend its services to Slovakia where the first contacts have already been established through a partner (Mrs Mária Kolarová). The free funded model of Styria was deemed feasible by Austrian and Slovak experts. The expansion to Slovakia could be also fostered by similar understanding of family concept, as well as

underlying problems to be solved (ageing, atomization of families). However, a future market analysis is needed since the legal and investment frame is different in the two countries.

11.2 Die Caterei – pro mente Wien – inclusive employment

PROBLEM

People who have not been actively on the primary labour market for a longer time lack the necessary skills and/or incentives to find a job. On the other hand, commercial companies are reluctant to employ such persons. Die Caterei offers a chance to such people to gain market-relevant knowledge and skills in a short-term contractual relationship (“training-on-the-job”).

OBJECTIVE

Die Caterei is a socio-economic business (sozialökonomischer Betrieb) which supports the labour market (re-)integration of different types of persons who are in a disadvantaged labour market position (mostly long-term unemployed, but also elderly people or persons with disabilities or with migrant backgrounds). The Austrian Public Employment Service (ams) is the organisation officially providing these people for potential jobs. The individually selected people (through interviews) are offered with a 6-week preparatory work at the end of which they must decide where to work. Die Caterei has 4 employment fields: kitchen, service & catering, office, cleaning). The applicants are then offered a 9-month service contract, and are provided with compulsory various ‘active labour market’ services, such as social care and job placement support. The aim is to find these people a new job on the labour market after 9 months.

In addition, since 2019 die Caterei provides a loan work system where interested employers can “rent” employees for a 3-month period as a sort of probation period. During this 3-month period, the rented employee remains in the employment of die Caterei which pays the worker’s (increased market) salary and in exchange gets 50% of this salary cost back from the actual employer. The win-win situation is that the rented person can be tried out and ideally he/she can really be employed after 3 months, and this probation only costs 50% for the company.

IMPACT

Die Caterei has a clear mandate from ams: 30% of people who has gotten a service contract must be employed on the primary labour market. The ams measures where these people are at the 92nd day after they have come out of service contract (through social security databases), i.e. successful candidates are those who had at least a 3-month job after ending their service contract with the die Caterei. Die Caterei has always fulfilled this success rate (was around the threshold during last year due to COVID-19), which shows its positive impact on strengthening an inclusive primary labour market in Austria. If somebody is not

initially taken by die Caterei or cannot find a stable job after 9 (+3) months, he/she must go back to ams and report again as unemployed.

BUSINESS MODEL AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Die Caterei started in 2000 and was established by its sponsoring organisation, Pro Mente Wien. Die Caterei is a socio-economic enterprise which is 100% funded by ams wien (on an annual basis, renewed only when the impact measure of 30% success rate for labour market integration is fulfilled). On the other hand, the company has a commercial side as a gastronomy enterprise with 2 canteens (under commercial law). In this sense, in addition to the 100% ams funding, the company must aim to reach a certain annual turnover which was around 1 M EUR before COVID-19 (from which the funding is offset).

FUTURE

Given the right financial support and enabling legal framework, such an Austrian-type socio-economic business (sozialökonomischer Betrieb) could be adopted in other countries such as Slovakia. The main benefit to be also utilised in Slovakia is the closeness to labour market and first-hand knowledge of labour market needs.

Based on the interview, 3 key challenges were identified that should be solved for a successful future adaptation in Slovakia: (1) the current system of functioning as both a socio-economic enterprise and a 'traditional' commercial business acts as a "double-edged sword", meaning that the company has to reach at least 1 million EUR turnover per year through excellent culinary services that must be achieved through the people sent by ams; (2) the funding situation allows to offer a 30 hours per week contract for people with around EUR 1.000 net salary, which is quite attractive for the target group (long-term unemployed with not much qualification), resulting in a 'lock-in' effect where people feel quite OK in die Caterei and do their utmost not to be placed on the labour market again; (3) the assignment policy of ams is counterproductive because many times they send such people to die Caterei who are not fit to such work or have no chance for placement after the 9-month contract.

The Austrian CEO, Mr Roman Bischof suggested that these problems could be solved by either offering the services of die Caterei as a training and work only with training staff (no employment contract), or by extending the contract period, or even place people to permanent positions at the die Caterei.

11.3 Schubu - inclusive education

PROBLEM

The Austrian (primary) education system is not inclusive enough in the sense that it does not sufficiently mitigate the gaps in learning outcomes between children from disadvantaged background and other children not suffering from such hindrances. SchuBu offers practical learning materials on an easy-to-use website to foster inclusiveness.

OBJECTIVE

In Austria, most schools have the necessary IT infrastructure but the online materials are not used in a creative and engaging way that would also support disadvantaged children. To mitigate this gap, SchuBu was launched in 2020 to offer practical online learning materials for students aged between the ages of 10-14. Currently the following subjects (mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology, geography, and German which is offered by considering students with migrant backgrounds) are provided on a really simple website which does not require the installation of an app. Simplicity was one of the main goals so as to involve all types of students in the learning process. The objective is to make the most relevant study requirements easily available to all students in a way where the relationships between various school subjects are easily understandable.

IMPACT

Concrete societal measures will be possible only later since 'paying' customers, i.e. public and private schools are only involved from 2021 but there is a huge and growing interest in the platform, which should also facilitate the digitalization efforts in Austria.

BUSINESS MODEL AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The content provided by SchuBu can be divided into three parts: (1) learning materials following the compulsory content for students aged 10-14, (2) supporting materials for teachers, and (3) individualized practices to deepen the knowledge gained and go beyond compulsory learning plans. The first two parts are free, but the third part must be paid for by interested schools – a competitive price of 12 EUR per year per student must be paid for these materials. The first such pilot schools will come on board from 2021.

The pilot schools were involved through direct contact to directorates dealing with education in each federal state in Austria, explaining the offer of SchuBu in relation to the ongoing digitalisation of the Austrian education system. Currently there are 30 test schools from all around Austria, involving around 2.000 students, with at least 5 schools from each federal state – their role is to give constant feedback on the project. There is a huge interest in the service in Austria and even more schools want to be involved but there are not enough human resources available at SchuBu, thus an internal upsizing is foreseen.

Based on feedback, SchuBu has already changed its initial concept in the sense that it has become a real 'learning platform' in place of a 'presentation platform', taking into consideration the needs of students (the focus is shifted from teachers to students). This entails more focus on gamification and other engaging and creative activities instead of 'frontal' presentations.

FUTURE

The mid-term plan is to build out a parallel (hybrid) system where traditional school books are complemented with digital solutions. SchuBu's vision is that digital solutions will take the main role in teaching due to their various advantages, such as depth of content,

interactivity, and easy portability. SchuBu would like to be the service provider for Austrian schools during and after this digital transition, contributing to a shift in learning concept ('disruption') where the outdated 'encyclopedic' knowledge should give way to a more modern understanding of studying.

The adaptability of such a solution to countries like Slovakia depends on the school infrastructure, e.g. proper internet connection and computer facilities, as well as the political engagement to foster digitalisation (Austria is European leader with Norway and Sweden, even Germany lags behind in terms of IT infrastructure). Nevertheless, content-wise such a website can be 'easily' adapted to local needs (languages and concrete learning requirements per subject and school year) since the compulsory content (and even format) of education for children aged 10-14 is quite similar across Europe, at least for nature sciences which is currently offered by SchuBu.

11.4 VAMOS – social inclusion

PROBLEM

Work is a fundamental right and an important pillar for a self-determined, independent life. However, our working world is becoming more and more complex and the demands on employees are increasing. People with an impairment, be it mental or physical, are often unable to meet these demands or are excluded from the "normal" labour market because they cannot meet them. For a modern and solidary society, it is therefore particularly important to also give these people the chance to live an integrated life according to their needs and possibilities.

OBJECTIVE

VAMOS is a non-profit association that deals with all issues related to the integration of people with special needs in all areas of life. The aim is to provide young people, adults and children with an offer geared to their needs for development and advancement in work and leisure in order to lead an independent life.

IMPACT

With its modern service companies, VAMOS stands for normality and lived togetherness in the working world. The main aim is to give people the opportunity for personal development in an environment that is suitable for them, in order to find their place in society.

BUSINESS MODEL AND DEVELOPMENT

The services offered by VAMOS are very diverse and range from apprenticeships at seven locations in the district of Oberwart in southern Burgenland to integration in the work process to personal counselling, coaching and its own VAMOS Academy.

Apprenticeships are offered in the areas of carpentry, kitchen and confectionery, landscape conservation, housekeeping, print and design. But services such as office services and postal partners are also part of the comprehensive programme. On the one hand, the products are needed for internal needs, on the other hand, for example, fresh menus are produced daily in the kitchen for the delivery service "Meals on Wheels". In the pastry shop, commissioned work for events (e.g. weddings, etc.) is realised. In the carpentry workshop, traditional wooden toys as well as wooden floors and furniture are made to measure. Another field of activity is the restoration of old wooden furniture. In the landscape maintenance department, the tasks range from working on green areas, various woodwork and tree pruning to design work. Housekeeping traditionally involves ironing, washing, cleaning, etc. Since 2011, VAMOS has been running the post office in Markt Allhau as a postal partner, thus making a valuable contribution to maintaining the regional infrastructure.

Another mainstay is the offer of training jobs in the form of transit jobs, AusbildungsFit, occupational therapy, apprenticeship training and work testing. Transit jobs are an offer for e.g. long-term unemployed, which are placed by the Public Employment Service (AMS) to prepare people for entering normal working life. AusbildungsFit is a programme for young people up to 21 years of age who want to prepare for vocational training, as they still have deficits to make up before they can apply for an apprenticeship. Occupational therapy is a way to bridge the time until people can return to a normal job in the economy. A special type of training is apprenticeship training for young people who have not been able to get an apprenticeship place because of a disability, difficulties at school or other reasons. Here they have the opportunity to complete an apprenticeship in the above-mentioned apprenticeship occupations or to obtain a partial qualification. Within the framework of work trials, people can get an orientation in the companies in order to sound out their possibilities and abilities.

Within the framework of accompaniment and coaching, VAMOS offers e.g. work assistance, vocational training assistance, job coaching and integration accompaniment. Job assistance is a service for adults and young people with special needs and supports them in their job search or helps them find a suitable apprenticeship. Within the framework of integrative vocational training, VAMOS supports young people in the form of vocational training assistance. For a successful start in a new job, VAMOS supports with job coaching if needed. As an outpatient service, there is so-called integration support for children and adolescents in case of difficulties in the family, in the social environment or at school on the one hand, and on the other hand also for families within the framework of family counselling.

FUTURE

VAMOS can be seen as a good example of a successful initiative born out of necessity and shows that there is a wealth of support services available. However, the prerequisite for success is always the willingness of all those involved to actively work on solving the challenges.

11.5 FreuRaum – inclusive education

PROBLEM

Work integration for persons after long-term sick leave, with a migration background or persons aged 50 and over, here especially women, requires special support. Success depends on guidance and support adapted to the needs of the individual concerned and ideally leads to job placement in the primary labour market. Opening up this opportunity to all people who experience disadvantages on the labour market due to various causes listed above means a gain for all those involved, but especially for the people concerned, who experience social and economic inclusion as a result.

OBJECTIVE

FreuRaum is run in the legal form of a registered cooperative, which has existed since June 2018. The common good economy and the sustainability goals are to be seen as the basis of the entire company. FreuRaum is, among other things, a training company for the reintegration or initial integration of people into the labour market, including training for a shortened apprenticeship for adults in the field of gastronomy.

IMPACT

The integral concept of the FreuRaum pursues ecological goals in addition to social aspects; regional certification has already been obtained and organic certification is being sought.

The FreuRaum also offers the following services:

- Restaurant and café with predominantly organic, seasonal and regional food.
- Cooking and sewing classes, seminars, readings, lectures, workshops or community activities
- Sales room with handmade, sustainable gifts from the region, handicrafts, natural cosmetics or junk goods
- Repair café to repair appliances, textiles, etc. with and without support in order to achieve sustainability or conserve resources.

The following themes are described as guiding principles:

- We want to create spaces in which prejudice-conscious encounters are possible; spaces for enjoyment and conversation, art and culture, talents and participation, old furniture and new ways of thinking. We distance ourselves from the ideas of capitalism and neoliberalism and feel committed to an economy that serves the common good.
- FreuRaum is also a statement for us. For community and the common good. For environmental protection and resource conservation. For openness and accessibility. For development and empathy.

BUSINESS MODEL AND DEVELOPMENT

The target group is mainly women, especially those with a migration background or over 50 years of age, although there is currently also one man in training to become a catering specialist. In 2021, five apprentices and one person with integration assistance were employed in the fields of hospitality specialist, cook, waiter and office specialist.

Reintegration is offered for six months, especially after long-term illnesses, for example due to psychological problems, in order to regain security in working life and in contact with people. During the training, the employees receive support from volunteer buddies of FreuRaum, for example for the subjects German or accounting. Of the six people employed in the first rotation of the employment project, four could be placed on the first market after six months of reintegration.

FreuRaum receives assignments directly from the Public Employment Service (AMS), other coaching organisations in the AMS context or from the women's counselling centre. The wage costs of the persons placed are subsidised by the AMS or taken over directly, training costs and a contribution to administration are borne by FreuRaum.

At the same time, employees take advantage of the opportunity to get in touch with guests of the restaurant or the salesroom during their breaks or visit other offers of the FreuRaum, which also promotes integration.

FUTURE

The idea that FreuRaum should be a franchise project in the future was inherent in its foundation. There have already been enquiries from the Federal Republic of Germany about the FreuRaum concept, which is why process concepts, guidelines, standards, role descriptions, activity descriptions, onboarding and offboarding processes (since trainees change every six months) have been and are being written in the meantime, so that international implementation can be made possible and facilitated.

Synergies in cross-border exchanges would be expected above all in the possibility of exchanging staff (language skills and exchange of experience), a transfer of knowledge - for example at regular meetings - or the exchange of regional specialities, recipes etc.

The special feature of the project is seen in the diversity and the combination of all offers, so that there are no competing enterprises with this range of offers and the high quality offered. From this situation, FreuRaum sees itself as a driving force for change towards sustainability, circular economy and compliance with the SDGs, both regionally and internationally.

11.6 NachbarschaftsHILFE PLUS – social services

PROBLEM

Loneliness in rural communities is increasing. Often older people are dependent on help, but no longer have relatives who can or want to help. Nevertheless, they would like to be independent in their familiar surroundings for as long as possible. Migration to larger cities is also potentially increasing if there are no jobs close to home.

OBJECTIVE

NachbarschaftsHILFE Plus is organised as a non-profit association and aims to ensure that older people can live in their home community for as long as possible. This is to be made possible through mutual help in the form of various social services such as driving and escort services, walking services, shopping services, social evenings, etc. Another goal is to make the community more attractive by promoting non-party community cooperation.

IMPACT

In addition to making everyday life easier for those affected, intergenerational coexistence in the community is also revitalised. The focus is on promoting the quality of life of the elderly. The project also makes an important contribution for volunteers. In addition to the possibility of offering help, it also strengthens the integration into the community structures for people who have moved in.

BUSINESS MODEL AND DEVELOPMENT

NachbarschaftsHILFE Plus has been operating as a non-profit association since 2014. The target group is people who can no longer do everything on their own, but do not need to go to a nursing home. In many cases, people do not have a car or a driving licence and use the social services. Neighbourhood HELP Plus addresses people who do not have the support of their family and are therefore not mobile and the risk of loneliness is high.

The project is unique because it coordinates neighbourly help in a very professional way and shows great appreciation for the volunteers. Neighbourhood HELP Plus consists of a mixture of coordination and (employee) and volunteer help. The association is characterised by non-partisan cooperation.

The services are free of charge for the clients. It is financed by a grant from the Province of Burgenland as well as by municipal contributions and donations and small business partnerships. 21 municipalities with about 700 volunteers participate in the project.

FUTURE

Synergies arise above all in the practical exchange of ideas with regions that have similar projects. This possibility is also conceivable for cross-border cooperation. In this context, it is relevant to analyse and evaluate the social and communal structures.

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Annex I – List of Interview Partners

No.	Interview partner	Interviewee name	Interviewing organisation
1	Vinosady	Ivana Juráčková	Sociálni inovátori
2	Lozorno	Luboš Tvrdoň	Sociálni inovátori
3	Orechová Potôň	Szilárd Gálffy	Sociálni inovátori
4	Holis	Michaela Lipková	Sociálni inovátori
5	Fakulta Manažmentu UK	Peter Gál, Marian Holienka	Sociálni inovátori
6	Nadácia Pontis, Generácia 3.0	Martina Kolesárová, Norbert Maur	Sociálni inovátori
7	Spiace miesta	Hana Kucharovičová, Vera Kiseľová	Sociálni inovátori
8	Hentoto	Michal Hajcik	Sociálni inovátori
9	Akadémia vzdelávania a výskumu v sociálnych službách	Mária Kovalová	Sociálni inovátori
10	Pontis - projekt Nový Darca	Michal Kišša	Sociálni inovátori
11	Nadácia Pre dobro	Ilona Damborská	Sociálni inovátori
12	Slovenský Pacient	Rado Herda	Sociálni inovátori
13	Tenenet	Elena Kopcová, Marcela Hajtmánková	Sociálni inovátori
14	Vlaky.net	Marian Madara	Sociálni inovátori
15	EPIC	Eva Havelková	Sociálni inovátori
16	Ministerstvo práce, soc. vecí a rodiny	Ingrid Ujváriová, Martina Vselková	Sociálni inovátori
17	Cesta von - projekt Omama	Pavel Hrica	Sociálni inovátori
18	AfB Group	Marek Antoňák	Sociálni inovátori
19	Simulátor autizmu	Mikuláš Štubňa	Sociálni inovátori
20	TTSK	Andrea Koláriková	Sociálni inovátori
21	Človek v ohrození	Michaela Mudroňová	Sociálni inovátori
22	Zuzana Suchová	Zuzana Suchová	Sociálni inovátori
23	Implementačná agnetúra	Maria Kalmárová, Alena Šranková	Sociálni inovátori
24	Mesto Bratislava	Matúš Ferencík	Sociálni inovátori
25	Slovak Global Network	Lucia Šicková, Ivana Ihnátová, Barbora Baronová	Sociálni inovátori
26	Pracujúce mamy	Patrícia Hirschnerová	Sociálni inovátori
27	Ubytovňa Fortuna	Matúš Ferencík	Sociálni inovátori
28	BBSK	Veronika Ormandíková, Marcela Štomfová, Zuzana Lacková	Sociálni inovátori
29	Pontis - projekt Budúcnosť Inak	Daniela Kellerová	Sociálni inovátori
30	Bratislava - mestská časť Rusovce	Lucia Henčelová	Sociálni inovátori
31	Coworking Cvernovka	Michala Hrnčiarová	Sociálni inovátori
32	Mária Mrázová	Mária Mrázová	Sociálni inovátori
33	Bivio	Marián Horanič	Sociálni inovátori
34	Jan Herštek - projekt Synge na Slovensku	Jan Herštek	Sociálni inovátori
35	Nexteria	Tomáš Hasala	Sociálni inovátori
36	IG24	Simona Ďurišová	Sociálni inovátori

37	Social Marie SR	Barbora Matašová	Sociální inovátori
38	Autistické centrum Andreas	Kateřina Nakládalová	Sociální inovátori
39	YMCA	Radovan Jančula	Sociální inovátori
40	Brána do života	Jana Bahulová	Sociální inovátori
41	Social Entrepreneurship Network Austria	Constanze Stockhammer	ZSI
42	Arbeitplus	Clara Moder	ZSI
43	Sozial Marie	Wanda Moser-Heindl, Petra Radeschnig	ZSI
44	Silver Living	Thomas Morgl	ZSI
45	Wogen	Eveline Hendekli	ZSI
46	Alterslust	Rosa Maria Eglseer	ZSI
47	AfB Group	Kurt Essler	ZSI
48	Wohnbuddy	Marlene Welzl	ZSI
49	Volkshilfe	Doris Moravec	ZSI
50	SchuBu	Paul Beyer Klinkosch	ZSI
51	Dahir	Georg Kotzmuth	ZSI
52	Jamba	Iva Tsoleva	ZSI
53	Die Caterei	Roman Bischof	ZSI
54	Three Coins	Goran Maric	ZSI
55	Hausaktiv	Vanja Sehic- GavriloVIC	ZSI
56	R.U.S.Z.	Sepp Eisenriegler, Harald Reichl	ZSI
57	Kreativwirtschaft Austria	Gerin Trautenberger	ZSI
58	Eutopian	Bahanur Nasya	ZSI
59	SOS Kinderdorf	Marek Zeliska	FHB
60	Sozialtherapeutische WG Pronegg	Robert Krammer	FHB
61	WG Fühl dich wohl	Gerald Herowitsch- Trinkl	FHB
62	Gesundheitsforum Burgenland	Ewald Michael Schlaffer	FHB
63	Nachbarschaftshilfe Plus	Thomas Steiner	FHB
64	Verein Heinezfrauen	Petra Rosner	FHB
65	Verein VAMOS	Gerhard Kuich	FHB
66	Mole Mental	Petra Ott	FHB
67	FreuRaum	Anja Haider-Wallner	FHB
68	Römerland Carnuntum	Franz Babka-Nowak	FHB
69	NGO Gertrud	Simone Biegler	FHB
70	Soo gut	Wolfgang Brillmann	FHB
71	Pannonische Tafel	Andrea Roschek	FHB
72	Bionana	Simona Nitschinger	FHB
73	Unverschwendet	Andreas Diesenreiter	FHB
74	Green Energy	Alexander Pultz	FHB
75	Pflegeservice Burgenland GmbH (tbc)	Klaudia Friedl	FHB

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