

MARZENA SYLWIA KRUK
Maria Curie Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland

Support for social entrepreneurship in Poland under the European Social Fund – changes and challenges

Abstract: The European Commission directs its financial instruments to the broadly understood social economy sector, including the development of social entrepreneurship. In 2011, the European Commission presented the Social Business Initiative (SBI), defining the activities of the European Union to support the development of social enterprises (key stakeholders of the social economy). According to the assumptions of the European Commission, social enterprises are specific organisations that combine social objectives with initiatives promoting entrepreneurial attitudes, focusing on achieving wider social goals or exerting social impact. Financial support is also intended to generate changes in a broader time perspective in the coming years of the EP's activity. Since Poland's accession to the European community in 2004, the social economy (including social enterprises) has received financial support in many areas of its activity. The beneficiaries of the funds covered not only social economy entities (PES), but also institutions supporting the development of the social economy, mainly social entrepreneurship, such as Social Economy Support Centers (OWES). It is mainly these key entities of the social economy – social enterprises have become places of new jobs and motivators of civic activity. The aim of the article is to quantify the financial support received from the European Social Fund in the years 2004–2016 for activities aimed at the development of social entrepreneurship (SE). The article is theoretical and analytical. The applied research method is the analysis of data contained in reports and expert opinions obtained mainly from Social Economy Support Centers.

Keywords: European Social Fund; evaluation; results; social entrepreneurship; Theory of Change

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INTRODUCTION

In Poland, the definition of the social economy and the characteristics of social entrepreneurship were defined for the first time in the National Program for the Development of the Social Economy for 2014–2020 (Journal of Laws of 2014, item 1649) as

“a sphere of civic activity, which through economic and public benefit activities serves: professional and social integration of people at risk of social marginalisation, job creation, providing social services of general interest and local development”. A narrow definition of the social economy focuses on social enterprises as its elementary entities. A broader definition of the social economy includes all forms of “non-profit” or “third sector” activities within the social economy (Maciejewski, Pera, Wach, 2018). In its documents and guidelines (ESF programs), the European Commission uses the general name social economy, including funds aimed at activities in the field of social entrepreneurship development. In the article, the author uses the concept of social economy in its narrow sense, considering mainly social entrepreneurship.

In Poland, the social economy sector is an important element of the country's economy. It mainly supports local activities and employment of socially excluded people. Local economic initiatives promote local resources, both material and human. Social economy entities implement activities in which the private or public sectors are not fully sufficient or are often uninterested in participation due to the profit deficit.

Social economy entities cannot function without financial support. Financing the social economy sector from the European Union funds has provided new opportunities for the development of the social economy in Poland, which has given rise to many civil society initiatives. Since 2004, the European Union has been supporting the social economy by financing activities and programs at the national and regional level. The main research question is: What changes can be observed in the local space after the implementation of activities co-financed from external sources. This is an important question due to subsequent subsidies, so that they are used correctly and accurately, bringing not only short-term effects.

Self-evaluation of the activities of social economy entities is included in the regulations of their activities. Moreover, all forms of financial support and their effects are monitored by institutions supervising the implementation of activities in the field of the social economy.

There are quantitative evaluation reports on the status of the achieved indicators of the scope of the implemented programs supporting the social economy.

Financial support is intended not only to provide immediate assistance, but also to generate resources for future activities, after the end of financial support. Specific research questions. It would be necessary to consider whether the financial support for social entrepreneurship brings quantitative effects, but also if they are observed in the long term. Can the Theory of Change be implemented in the evaluation of social economy support programs in Poland?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many representatives of postmodernity in management science: Casey (2002), Knight, Morgan (1991), D. Boje (1999) reflects the postmodern organisation. They point out that this type of organisation is based on knowledge, creativity and information. The organisation is focused on designing and selling services and products. Human capital is treated as an investment and the organisation becomes competitive on the global market. Collaborative networks are targeted at both local, national, and international levels. The postmodern market approach also affected social economy entities. Currently, they implement their goals and mission as a network and virtual organisation.

Organisations of social economy are aimed at those clients and recipients where global concerns do not have the possibility of obtaining economic profit. Social economy entities implement social, political or marketing projects for and together with socially excluded people. Their goal is to actively involve people and entities for the “common good”. Identification with a common brand actions, awareness of joint action is beyond economic profit. According to Defourn and Develtere (2008), there are two basic approaches to defining the social: the institutional and legal approach and the normative approach. In the institutional and legal approach, the scope of the definition determines the main forms (social economy entities). Normative approach defines of the social economy from the point of view of its characteristics, goals and principles of functioning. In Poland, social economy is most often defined by social entrepreneurship (Social Economy in European Union, 2020: 27)¹.

According to the European Research Network EMES European Research Network: The criteria for determining the entities of the social economy are divided into economic and social criteria.

Economic criteria:

- conducting economic and social activity with generating economic profit intended for the development of the social economy entity,
- independence, sovereignty of institutions in relation to public institutions,
- bearing the economic risk.

Social criteria:

- clear orientation towards a socially useful goal,
- the grassroots, civic nature of the initiative,
- a specific, possibly democratic, management system,
- as community-oriented as possible,
- limited profit distribution (Defourny Nyssens, 2012: 12–14).

The essence of the social economy and non-profit organisations is to find alternative solutions to finance and manage their activities in order to create the added value. The authors emphasize a catalyst for social change (Austin, Stevenson, Wei-Skillern, 2006).

¹ According to the current version of the document, the entities of the social economy are:

- Social enterprises, including social cooperatives referred to in the Act of 27 April 2006 on special cooperatives [Journal Of Laws, item 651, as later amended].
- Reintegration entities providing social and professional reintegration services for people at risk of social exclusion, i.e.: CIS, KIS, ZAZ, WTZ, referred to in the Act of 27 August 1997 on vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled people.
- Non-governmental organisations or the entity referred to in art. referred to in Art. 3. Paragraph 3 point 1 of the Act of April 24, 2003 on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work [Journal of 2016, item 1817, as later amended] or a non-profit company, referred to in Art. 3 point 4 of this act.
- Economic entities established in connection with the implementation of a social goal: non-profit companies, cooperatives, the purpose of which is to employ people with disabilities [Journal Of Laws of 2017, item 1560, as later amended].

THEORY OF CHANGE

Along with the development of social economy entities in the world, a need arose to measure the effectiveness of their activities. One of them is the measurement of social added value. The economics dictionary defines this as: “the company’s total sales minus the purchases of inputs from other companies. What remains is the amount to be shared between workers’ wages and owners’ profits. National income is the sum of value added in all enterprises in the economy (Black, 2008: 513–514). In social economy entities it is a different approach stating that the added value is the additional value of a public or private good resulting from its provision to the society or an individual by social economy entities (Kamerschen, McKenzie, Nardinelli, 1991: 108). Clark, Rosenzweig, Long, Olsen (2004) created a catalogue of the most commonly used methods of measuring social impact. They include: Theories of Change, Balanced Scorecard, Acumen McKinsey Scorecard, Social return Assessment, AtKisson Compass Assessment for Investors, Ongoing Assessment of Social Impacts, Social Return on Investment, Benefit-Cost Analysis, Poverty and Social Impact Analysis. Logical models are another method used to measure the effectiveness of social economy entities. The latest world literature combines the logical model and divides them into two types:

- models illustrating the theory of program operation,
- illustrating the impact of the program “theories of change”.

Weiss, C. H. 1998. *Evaluation: Methods for studying programs and policies*. Upper Saddle River, NY: Prentice Hall. The Theory of Change:

- step 1: The focus in on long term vision of a program and projects,
- step 2: agreeing on a common goal and results of activities in the project,
- step 3&4: the beneficiaries prepare the monitoring of the results achieved in the subsequent stages of the project (Msila, Setlhako, 2013: 324).

Ward, B., J. Lewis. 2004. Measuring social impact: The foundation of Social return on Investment (SROI), New Economics Foundation: Also referred to as a “theory of change”, an impact map (Table 1) tells a story about how an organisation effects change. Table 1 shows a logical model of how an organisation achieves its goals based on: financial sources (in this case from the UE), activities it implements to obtain long-term and short-term results (goals). It is worth noting that the last element of this model is the impact on changes (even in the period of e.g. 4 years after the end of activities) (Ward, Lewis, 2004: 7).

According to Vogel 2012, the theory of change shows the process of shifting from investment outlays through taking up activities, their immediate results, then social results and finally social impact. It is crucial to focus on the results that take up a tangible form as well as on long-term impacts. “This theory is a clear road map for change. Using a logical model, clearly indicate the steps to achieve the goals of the organisation and contribute to changes in a narrow perspective (for organisations) and a wide perspective (for the organisation’s environment, recipients and local community)” (Msila, Setlhako, 2013: 324).

The model of the theory of change increases efficiency and transparency in the process of evaluating social interventions, and also allows building a common understanding of its goals among all stakeholders involved (Guthrie et al., 2005). It is crucial to focus on results that take a more tangible form, and on long-term impacts. Logical models are an illustration of how a given program works (Kollogg Foundation, 2004).

A technique that is used in the *theory of change* is the use of a result map, which is a visual diagram between initiative strategies and intended results. For example Basic Logic Model Development The logical model of the Kellogg Foundation (Table 1) (Msila, Setlhako, 2013: 324).

Logic model can take many different forms, tabular and descriptive. The logical model allows for the evaluation of each stage of project implementation and after its completion. Logical model (descriptive or tabular) quickly and easily indicates the level of obtained results (e.g. through ongoing quantitative or qualitative monitoring of the project). A basic logic model is shown in Table 1: Resources, activities, Outputs for customers, Short-Term Outcomes, Intermediate Outcomes and Long Term Outcomes (problem solved) (Wholey, Hatry, Newcomer, 2010: 57).

Table 1. Logic Model Development

Resources	Activities	Outputs	Short and Long Term Outcomes	Impact
In order to accomplish our set of activities we will need following	In order to address our problem or asset we will conduct the following activities	We expect that once completed or under way these activities will produce the following evidence of service delivery	We expect that if completed or ongoing these activities will lead to the following changes in 1-3 years	We expect that if completed these activities will lead to the following changes in 4+ years
UE-ES Funds	OWES	PES	Jobs	Lower unemployment Cooperation networks

Source: Author's own work based on: Kellogg Foundation, Michigan, Logic Model development Guide, 2004: 2.

According to Kellogg Foundation, the sequence of inputs – effects remained the standard of logical models. It is modified with different types of effects:

- first results,
- intermediate results,
- long-term results.

The logical model presented in the previous chapter is the basis for the analysis of support from EU funds for social economy entities and for the analysis of both short-term and long-term results. In the first stage, it is necessary to analyse the theory of the program's operation, i.e. the funds allocated to the social economy. According to Parsons (1999: 2), a logical model has the task of:

- clearly defining the purpose of the activities undertaken,
- indicating the necessity of its implementation,
- indicating specific measurable effects/results,
- describing what actions will be taken to achieve the results and the goals,
- monitoring all activities to achieve the goal.

The logical model is a reference point for all people and institutions involved in the implementation of the activities.

Logic models are more often used to prepare projects, their implementation and management. The analysis of the theory of change requires the use of a logical model to indicate in a specific way the change that occur during and after the implementation of various programs. Changes must be demonstrated, which proves that the programs

implemented are right (McLaughlin, 1994: 60). A thorough analysis of the programs included in the strategic documents as well as a thorough evaluation of the implementation of tasks and the obtained indicators is necessary for the proper use of financial resources. EU funds for the development of the social economy must be properly used and the necessary activities subsidized. It is worth analysing the activities of social economy entities not only due to the developed products but also long-term results. How do the funds received cause positive changes over time?

FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS FOR SUPPORTING THE SOCIAL ECONOMY BY EU FUNDS

The National Program for the Development of the Social Economy (KPRES) was deemed necessary to boost the development of the social economy, both in terms of quantity and quality². By 2023, KPRES is introducing various financial instruments for social economy organisations and social enterprises, which are to be provided by the National Social Entrepreneurship Fund (KFPS) until 2023, which will be located within the structure of National Bank of Economy (BGK), while financial support is to come from the European Structural Funds (ESF), other public sources and private donations (KPRES 2020). This was served by, among others funds from the European Union. Table 2 shows the importance of social economy enterprises compared to commercial enterprises and public administration in the use of EU funds by voivodeship and place of employment. Social economy enterprises receive the greatest support from over 42% (Warmińsko-Mazurskie) to 93% (Pomorskie, Śląskie).

Table 2. Structure of the population of institutional recipients of EU support by place of employment and voivodship Poland (n = number of project participants) in 2018.

Voivodeship	Companies	Public administration	Social economy enterprise	Other	Total
Dolnośląskie [n = 1456]	7%	8%	83%	2%	100%
Kujawsko-pomorskie [n = 831]	16%	13%	67%	3%	100%
Lubelskie [n = 2466]	1%	16%	71%	11%	100%
Lubuskie [n = 1022]	0%	25%	65%	10%	100%
Łódzkie [n = 1192]	4%	32%	59%	5%	100%
Małopolskie [n = 1318]	9%	19%	67%	5%	100%
Mazowieckie [n = 1422]	4%	11%	77%	8%	100%

² The quantitative goal is to increase the number of operating social enterprises, increase the number of operating social economy entities, and increase the number of people involved in social economy. Qualitative development is: creating jobs, especially for people in a difficult situation, providing local communities with good quality public services, achieving by social economy entities a stable basis for activity by obtaining revenues from activities and external sources [National Program for the Development of Social Economy. Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. Warsaw, 2014: 45]

Opolskie [n = 896]	2%	30%	61%	7%	100%
Podkarpackie [n = 220]	0%	46%	54%	0%	100%
Podlaskie [n = 122]	1%	11%	80%	8%	100%
Pomorskie [n = 46]	7%	0%	93%	0%	100%
Śląskie [n = 2596]	0%	6%	93%	1%	100%
Świętokrzyskie [n=526]	2%	25%	48%	24%	100%
Warmińsko-mazurskie [n = 138]	1%	18%	42%	39%	100%
Wielkopolskie [n = 1132]	2%	5%	87%	7%	100%
Zachodniopomorskie [n = 663]	5%	26%	68%	1%	100%
Total	530	2448	11467	1004	15449

Source: Report (2018). Meta-analysis of the results of evaluation studies concerning the evaluation of ESF support, Warsaw

These data show the importance of the social economy in EU subsidies for various sectors of the economy in Poland. “In 2020, the social economy is an important factor in employment growth, social cohesion and the development of social capital. Achieving such a defined overarching goal requires a decisive acceleration of the development of the social economy in Poland, measures provided for under the ESF are crucial for the development of the social economy in Poland” (National Program for the Development of Social Economy). Both in the financial perspective of the EU funds 2007–2013 and 2014–2020, under operational programs co-financed from the ESF, there were measures aimed at the development of the social economy.

In 2007–2013, the social economy was supported mainly by the Human Capital program. Both under Priority I *Employment and Social Integration* managed at the central level and at the regional level under Priority VII Promotion of social integration. The program was the main source of financing activities for the social economy, as part of it was possible to use non-repayable subsidies to start up social cooperatives. POKL is also micro-loans for social economy entities as well as training and other activities consulting. As reported by the Society for Socio-Economic Investments, in 2007–2013, loans were used by 214 ES entities for the amount of PLN 25.18 million.

In 2014–2020, support for the social economy was continued under the Knowledge Education Development Program (POWER), centrally managed by the Ministry of Development, and 16 Regional Programs. POWER supported social economy entities with loans granted to existing social economy entities. The second area was to support entities for activities such as training for social enterprises, networking of social economy entities, e.g. study visits, seminars, improving staff competences among employees of the Centers Supporting Social Economy and improving the quality of services provided. At the same time, regional operational programs (ROPs) offer their support for the existing social economy entities. As part of activities complementary to POWER in regions, subsidy support is provided for the creation of new social economy entities

and jobs in social enterprises. From the European Funds for the years 2014–2020, PLN 170 million was allocated to returnable instruments for social economy entities. Support is granted under the condition that it will lead to an increase in the number of jobs for people at risk of social exclusion, to preserve the existing jobs and to achieve social benefits from planned projects. Regional Programs 2020 In 16 Regional Operational Programs 2014–2020 ROP it is possible, inter alia, comprehensive support at accredited Social Economy Support Centres in the creation and operation of social economy entities, in particular social enterprises, and job creation. Under the 2014–2020 financial perspective, 1,349 social economy entities benefited from structural funds. There were on average 2 projects per one entity.

The next perspective for 2021–2027 is the continuation of support in the scope of actions already taken and new types in line with the recommendations from the evaluation of previous programs. In the years 2021–2027, socially oriented measures and social integration of people experiencing poverty will be undertaken, as well as increasing the availability and quality of social services. Professional activation will be of key importance in this respect. Undertakings in the field of the social economy will serve to create permanent and high-quality jobs in the social economy sector (Ministry of Investment and Development, 2019: 45).

EFFECTS OF SUPPORT GRANTED TO SOCIAL ECONOMY ENTITIES FROM THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND (ESF) INSTRUMENTS – ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL ECONOMY SUPPORT CENTERS (OWES)

In the time perspective, the application of the theory of change and the tools of the logical model seems to be an adequate tool for a stable and proper allocation of funds for the purposes of the social economy. In the time perspective, evaluation is inevitable, not only at the national level, but internally in the social economy entities themselves. An example is the analysis of funds received from the EU by the Social Economy Support Centres in Poland (OWES).

The Social Economy Support Centres in Poland (OWES) offer was constructed in such a way as to comprehensively meet the needs of social enterprises. The relevance of the support provided by OWES was positively assessed by the beneficiaries. According to *GUS. 2018. Effects of support provided to social economy entities from the European Social Fund in 2014–2020*, thanks to the support received, over 63% expanded their business and almost 59% improved the quality of their services. Almost 47% of social enterprises created new jobs and 32% of enterprises created new jobs for socially excluded people. 22.4% of social enterprises started cooperation with business. An important aspect was the improvement of competences among employees of social enterprises, which was indicated by almost 20% of the respondents. The increase in salaries was estimated at the level of 14% of the surveyed PES.

Table 3 shows the degree of achievement of goals and products by OWES. Two indicators [1,2] of the goal achievement were achieved with an excess of one indicator [1] and one at the same level as assumed [2]. As for the output indicators [3,4,5,6], as many as three of them exceeded the assumed level of the indicator [4,5,6]. One output indicator [3] remained at the same level.

Table 3. Degree of achievement of the objectives of measure 7.6 from EU funds (support for the social economy) by OWES in Zielona Góra

Indicator	Target value	Achieved on 30.03.2019	% of target value
Objective indicator Number of jobs created as a result of OWES activities in social enterprises [1]	151	158	105
Objective indicator Percentage of increase in turnover of enterprises covered by support [2]	5	5	100
Product indicator Number of projects where the costs of rational accommodation for people with disabilities were financed [3]	2	2	100
Product indicator Number of communities which, as a result of OWES activities, joined the consortium implementation of the project aimed at the development of the social economy [4]	18	21	102
Product indicator Number of social economy entities covered by support [5]	37	158	427
Product indicator Number of groups of initiatives which, as a result of the activities of OWES, developed assumptions for the creation of a social economy entity [6]	19	70	368

Source: GUS (2018). Effects of support provided to social economy entities from the European Social Fund in 2014–2020

The Social Economy Support Centers (OWES) accredited Social Economy Support Centres work in accordance with the standards developed by the Accreditation Committee in formal and organisational, ethical, local animation services, social economy development services, social enterprise support services and support instruments used. The services offered under OWES may take the form of:

- a) local animation services in the field of social economy development, including: animation meetings, diagnosis of the local environment, building development partnerships, civic dialogue, strategic planning involving other entities in the area of OWES activities,
- b) as part of the implementation of social economy development services by: initiating the creation of new social enterprises,
- c) support services for social enterprises, the support system in this regard should take the form of specialist and financial consultancy. In addition, social enterprises should be supported to improve their market position in terms of resource management (Regional Program for the Development of Social Economy in the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship, 2020: 94).

Table 4. The level of implementation of indicators by Social Economy Support Centers in the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship as of December 30, 2019. as part of EU funds for the years 200-2020. Measure 9.4. Support for the social economy by OWES

Indicator	Sum in Dolnośląskie		
	Since project onset	Target	Long term result
The number of groups which, as a result of the activities of OWES, developed assumptions for establishing a social economy entity	123	174	176
The number of communities which, as a result of OWES activities, joined the joint implementation of projects aimed at the development of the social economy	152	156	160
Number of jobs created as a result of OWES activities for persons identified as excluded in the definition of a social enterprise	212	153	250
Number of non-governmental organisations conducting paid public benefit activity or economic activity established as a result of OWES	45	69	90
Number of full-time equivalent jobs created as a result of OWES activities in the supported social enterprises	73	153	190
Number of social economy entities covered by support	57	255	360
Number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion covered by support under the program	774	1524	1524
Number of jobs created in social enterprises	297	306	306

Source: Assessment of the effects of the support provided under Measure 7.6. Support for OWES and ROPS in strengthening the social economy sector RPO – L 2020.

Relevance in an evaluation study is understood as the degree of actual usefulness of the support provided for the development of the social economy sector in the region and as the use of knowledge and services received from social economy institutions (2020 Report: 88). The analysis shows the accuracy of the disbursed and implemented support by OWES in Zielona Góra.

In turn, the level of implementation of indicators by the Social Economy Support Centres in the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship as of December 30, 2019 as part of EU funds for the years 2004–2020. Indicates the target value achieved and the **long-term results**.

DEVELOPMENT OUTPUTS IN THE MAIN AREAS OF SOCIAL ECONOMY UP TO 2023

In the first period of implementation of UE funds in the 2004–2006, very few social economy entities participated in competitions to receive financing for an activity. The main reason for this was little experience in managing projects financed by the European Union. The experiences of this period were a motivator to undertake many activities in the field of training and raising competences in obtaining funds for the next years (Coffey International Development Report: Assessment of support in the field of social economy granted from UE funds, 2009: 24). Most of the funds were used for

promotional activities and changes in the management of the organisation. The positive change concerned:

- opening up social economy entities to new financing opportunities,
- promotion of social economy in the non-profit organisations, public government,
- reorganisation of the management method,
- new knowledge in the field of project cycle management.

The three main changes made in the 2007–2014 perspective were:

- opening up social economy entities to new financing opportunities,
- significant increase indicators (long term change until 2023 year),
- the changes apply to all areas proposed in the European Union guidelines in the area of the social economy: solidarity labour market, solidarity local community, competitive social entrepreneurship, solidarity society.

Table 5. National Programme for Social Economy Development until 2023

Space	The name of the indicator	Source	Base value (in 2016)	Target value (in 2023)
Space I: Solidarity labour market				
Until 2023 year will be created 35 000 new work places in social enterprises for people of social exclusion		MPiPS	5 000	40 000
	Number of active integration organisations	GUS	2	2 500
	Number of people with disabilities providing work for the social economy	GUS	145	160
	Number of active social enterprises	ROPS	600	1 600
Space II: Solidarity local community				
	Until 2023 year local government will be allocate 2% of the budget on the implementation of public tasks from social economy	GUS	1%	2%
	Percentage of local government with an approved social development program	GUS	0%	88%
	Number of OWES cooperating with other sectors	ROPS	10	60
Space: III Competitive social entrepreneurship				
	Until 2023 year the number of social economy organisations entities will be increase by 5 000.	GUS	30 000	35 000
	Average value of income social economic entities	GUS	330 000	350 000
	Number of certified quality marks	BGK	50	400
Space IV Solidarity society				
	Until 2023 year participation of young people (16–24 lata) in social economy entities will be increase by 28%	GUS	10%	38%
	Number of active social economy entities	GUS	94.4 thousand	108 thousand
	Number of local government that are the founders of social economy entities	GUS	0.9 thousand	1.1 thousand

Source: National Programme for Social Economy Development until 2023 – Social Solidarity Economy (NPSED)³.

³ Central Statistical Office (GUS), National Holding Bank (BGK), Regional Center of Social Policy (ROPS), Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MPiPS).

In the space of *solidarity labour market* up to year 2023 as many as 35 000 new jobs will be created, which is the largest visible change that has an impact on further changes (individual, family, economic, social life). Another visible long-term change is the creation of more than 1000 active social enterprises and their activity brings further profits and changes for the environment and the economy.

In second space *solidarity local community*, the main changes are in legal area. The percentage of local government with an approved social development program will increase from 0% to 88%. Development programs are a framework for local action for the social economy. In the third space *competitive social entrepreneurship* the index of entities organisations will increase to 5000. Moreover, the indicator of the number of certified quality marks will be increase to 350. This means a change not only quantitative but also qualitative. In the last space *solidarity society* an important change is the 28% increase in the participation of young people in social economic entities. The participation and commitment of this group is crucial for the functioning and future of the social economy in Poland.

In Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament on the European Social Fund, for the period 2014–2020⁴ social enterprises have been clearly indicated as entities whose services can be supported by European Social Fund (EFS) in order to support the labour market and preventing social exclusion, especially of the unemployed, young people, disabled people. An example are the funds allocated in all Polish voivodeships the Priority Investment (PI) 9.8. The main target activities are social economic entities and the support is to be focused on the development of entrepreneurship and employment growth. Table 5 shows the number of new jobs created in 2014–2023 in social enterprises created from European funds from PI 9.8.

Table 6. Number of new jobs created in 2014–2023 in social enterprises created from European Funds from PI 9.8

Voivodeship	Number of new work places (in thousands)
Dolnośląskie	1470
Kujawsko-pomorskie	1225
Lubelskie	1260
Lubuskie	700
Łódzkie	1155
Małopolskie	1085
Mazowieckie	1995
Opolskie	525
Podkarpackie	1295
Podlaskie	910
Pomorskie	1120
Śląskie	3255
Świętokrzyskie	595
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	945
Wielkopolskie	1645

⁴ Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing council regulation (EC) No 1081/2006:347.

Zachodniopomorskie	1050
Total	20300

Source: Author's own work based on: Evaluation of the selected Priority Investment program (PI) 9.8 points to several long-term changes, https://www.ekonomiaspoleczna.gov.pl/download/files/ZAPROSZENIA/Projekt_KPRES.pdf

- all voivodeships received support from EU funds for the social economy,
- social economy entities received new forms of financing,
- the main activities are aimed on new work places.

The European Union Funds for the social economy have made changes in aspects: system changes, management change, financial changes. The next years and the evaluation of activities will show the dimensions and effects in these three areas of change. New socio-demographic challenges and deficits in social areas provide new opportunities for social entrepreneurs, mainly, developing social innovations (de la Garza Carranza, Guzmán-Soria, López-Lemus, Sierra Martínez, 2020). It is also crucial to create pro-innovative attitudes and awareness among students and young people. Change agents (Ngoc Tuan, Pham, 2022) who receive financial support for innovative activities in the field of the social economy can deal with challenges faced by Europe and Poland.

CONCLUSION

The European Commission directs its financial instruments to the development of the social economy. Social economy entities use EU funds much better than public institutions or other entities. As the analysis shows, financial instruments bring the expected results. The assumed indicators were achieved especially in:

- the number of jobs created as a result of OWES activities in social enterprises,
- the number of projects which financed the costs of employing people with disabilities,
- increase in the turnover of enterprises covered by the support.

The greatest effects can be seen in the number of initiatives which, as a result of OWES activities, give the possibility of developing social economy in Poland (e.g. as much as 368% increase in the indicator of creating a consortium with municipalities in order to create social enterprises).

Long-term effects can be determined according to the logic development model. The logic model allows to verify the received support in terms of the program and the obtained indicators and effects (during the program implementation) and after its completion. Taking the example of the support granted from the European Social Fund for economic activities in the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship, it can be definitely stated that all indicators and long-term effects have been achieved.

The number of groups which, as a result of OWES activities, developed assumptions for the establishment of a social economy entity, increased by as much as 53 (from 123 during the project implementation to 176 after its completion). The number of communes (8 communes) that started cooperation for the implementation of projects aimed at the development of the social economy in the powiat also increased from 152 communes at the beginning of the implementation of measures to 160 communes after its completion. The number of non-governmental organisations (45) conducting paid

public benefit activities or economic activities resulting from OWES also increased from 45 non-governmental organisations to 90 after the end of the project.

The most noticeable long-term results can be seen in creating new jobs:

- the number of jobs created as a result of OWES activities for people identified as excluded in the definition of a social enterprise increased from 150 to 212,
- the number of full-time equivalent jobs created as a result of OWES activities in supported social enterprises increased from 73 to 190 new jobs,
- number of jobs created in social enterprises 297–306.

Long-term effects are noticeable in supporting people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, at the beginning of the program, 774 people were supported, and after its completion the number increased to 1,524 people.

National Program for the Development of the Social Economy until 2023 assumes the achievement of long-term effects in the basic areas of nationwide activities of the social economy, such as:

- 35,000 new jobs will be created in social enterprises for socially excluded people,
- local governments will allocate 2% of the budget for the implementation of public tasks from the social economy,
- the number of social economy organisations will increase by 5,000,
- the share of young people (16–24 years old) in social economy entities will increase by 28%.

The assumed indicators are verifiable only after the completion of the planned activities at the end of 2023. The analysis of the evaluation reports of the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship clearly shows that the social economy brings the assumed results both during the undertaken activities and after their completion. Conducting comprehensive nationwide quantitative and qualitative research in the area of social economy will allow for the verification of the achieved goals and the verification of actions taken by social economy entities.

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Marzena Sylwia Kruk, PhD, assistant professor in the Institute of Sociology at Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin. Her research interests focus on the sociology of health and disease, disability, migration, social exclusion and the social economy. She is a co-editor of the book *Let's give chances. Employment and work in the perspective of mental health* (2010) and over 50 publications related to social exclusion, social economy and project management. She is a member of the Polish Sociological Society and the Migration Section of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Certified trainer in the field of project management.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5067-632X>

Address:

Uniwersytet Marii Curie Skłodowskiej
Instytut Socjologii
Pl. Marii Curie Skłodowskiej 4
20-031 Lublin, Poland
e-mail: marzena.kruk@mail.umcs.pl