

Social Economy 2021. Social Entrepreneurship and Social Capital: Importance–Education–Development

Renata Śliwa, Dorota Murzyn

Abstract: This paper reviews the conference Social Economy 2021. Social entrepreneurship and social capital: importance – education – development. The event was around the issue of social entrepreneurship and its ability to mobilize social capital and expand the labour market by including previously excluded people in its participation.

Keywords: social economy, social capital, social entrepreneurship, education

JEL Codes: E24, I25, J24, L31

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On 18–19 November 2021, the next edition of the regular scientific conference on the social economy was held online under the title “*Social Economy 2021. Social entrepreneurship and social capital: importance-education-development*”. The Institute of Law and Economics of the Pedagogical University of Cracow organised the conference.

The following thematic areas of the conference were outlined: Social economy and its development in Poland and around the world; Awareness of the importance of social economy in the economy; Changes and challenges for the social economy sector in COVID-19 and after the pandemic; Social innovation and its impact on the integration of people with fewer opportunities; Social entrepreneurship – its importance in the economy and society; Conditions and opportunities for the development of social entrepreneurship; Social entrepreneurship education – challenges and threats; Methods of developing pro-social attitudes; Importance of social capital and its impact on the community; Role of educational practices in the development of social capital; Methods and determinants of social capital development; Role of new technologies in the development of social entrepreneurship and social capital.

This year’s proceedings were conducted around the issue of social entrepreneurship and its ability to mobilise social capital and expand the labour market by including previously excluded people in its participation.

The conference program included 28 papers in 7 sessions in Polish and English. The conference featured two keynote speakers, who were Thomas Gold, PhD of New York University (academician, consultant in developing continuous improvement processes for the work of

NGOs, advisor to companies marketing educational technologies) and Fred K. T. Ku, PhD of the Chinese University of Hong Kong Business School (academician, collaborator with domestic and international enterprises in introducing the idea of social good into business education, consultant to government projects). They presented inspiring examples of social entrepreneurship education, its importance and its development prospects.

The conference program also introduced a practical dimension as a workshop organised by the Statistical Office in Cracow. M. Walaszek presented the resources of public statistics with particular emphasis on data in the field of social economy (GUS, n.d.; OBGS, 2019).

Critical attention was paid to social enterprises as entities with significant capacity to respond innovatively to emerging economic, social and environmental challenges by creating sustainable jobs, promoting social inclusion and improving local social services (European Commission, 2020). An essential role in promoting the idea of social entrepreneurship or observing mechanisms and shaping pro-social attitudes fall to education. The deficit of social capital, manifested in such elements as low trust, weak ties and unstable norms of cooperation, is a fundamental constraint on developing social entrepreneurship (Kay, 2006). At the same time, to develop social economy entities (Jimenez & Morales, 2011), it is necessary to professionalise their activities, especially in the business sphere, by strengthening human capital and institutional environment (Pacut, 2020).

The conference brought together a group of organisations and researchers interested in the issue of social entrepreneurship, as well as lecturers, practitioners, analysts and students. It created a platform for exchanging ideas on the importance of social entrepreneurship in the modern economy and education development in this area. It provided inspiring examples of teaching methods that shape pro-social attitudes, especially among young people. It gave a chance to present the role of new technologies in the development of social entrepreneurship and to share analyses of contemporary theoretical and empirical problems related to these issues. The conference proved to be an essential platform for the exchange of scientific views of researchers of economics and social entrepreneurship. It positively contributed to strengthening cooperation between the Institute of Law and Economics and partners – both academic and from the socio-economic environment. The issues covered in the papers delivered, modified by the discussion, have been published in the monograph *“Ekonomia Społeczna 2021. Przedsiębiorczość społeczna i kapitał społeczny: znaczenie – edukacja – rozwój”* (Pach, Lupa-Wójcik, Maciejewski, (in press)).

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Conflict of Interest

None reported.

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