

FOREIGN EXPERIENCE

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Awareness and Attitudes towards Social Entrepreneurship among University Students and Disabled People. The Case of the Czech Republic*



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Abstract. In the Czech Republic, the concept of social entrepreneurship is still being developed and lacks, for example, systematic public support and regulation. In addition, the total number of social enterprises operating in the Czech Republic is low and thus, the concept of social entrepreneurship cannot reach its potential. To accelerate this development, raising awareness of social entrepreneurship among the Czech population may be important. Based on the survey carried out among 200 possible stakeholders of Czech social enterprises we explored the awareness and attitudes of selected groups of people towards social entrepreneurship. These groups of people are disabled people as typical employees of Czech social enterprises and university students as possible future founders of these enterprises. Our research project focuses on three issues: i) the level of awareness of the concept of social entrepreneurship among university students and disabled people; ii) the position of disabled people in the current labour market iii) the willingness of students to become entrepreneurs and to start business with social purpose. During the research, we used the method of structured questionnaires. The research shows that the awareness of the concept of social entrepreneurship is generally low. Nevertheless, students consider becoming entrepreneurs and starting a business with social purpose. The research also shows that according to the opinion of the respondents, it is difficult to find employment as a disabled person and that the current labour market does not offer enough vacant positions which could be interesting for these persons. From this perspective, we can assess further development of Czech social enterprises (especially of Work Integration Social Enterprises) as very important.

Key words: social enterprise, WISE, social entrepreneurship, disabled people, university students, awareness.

Introduction

In the Introduction, the typical features of the social entrepreneurship environment in the Czech Republic are highlighted. At the same time, this chapter also emphasizes the relationship between the conceptualization of social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic and in the EU countries. This relationship is represented especially by influence of EMES™ European Research Network approach to social entrepreneurship.

Social Entrepreneurship in the European Union

Nowadays, social entrepreneurship represents one of the possibilities the entrepreneurs can use to contribute to the solution of pressing social problems such as social exclusion, crime and unemployment. The general definition identifies social enterprises as the subjects selling products and providing services to achieve economic self-sufficiency and at

the same time following a social purpose. According to Borzaga, Galera, Franchini, Chiomento, Nogales and Carini [1], the term “social enterprise” is often conflated with WISE (Work integration social enterprise) in public understanding in European Union countries. These enterprises focus on the employment of labour-market disadvantaged persons and the objective of these enterprises is to integrate these people into society or prevent their social exclusion. The labour-market disadvantaged persons are disabled persons, socially excluded persons, low-qualified persons and older or long-term unemployed people.

Although the typical feature of the pre-pandemics labour market (EU-28; 6.3% in September 2019, Eurostat¹) is the low rate of

¹ *Unemployment statistics, Eurostat.* Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistic

unemployment, it is necessary to pay continuous attention to disadvantaged persons because these people face many specific social and health risks. According to Eurostat data, in 2018, 28.7 % of the EU population with a physical activity limitation was at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared with 19.2 % of those with no limitations. Social entrepreneurship can be an effective tool for the integration of these people into society and an innovative way to protect them against social exclusion.

In EU countries, there is no uniform definition of social entrepreneurship. In some EU countries, social entrepreneurship is included in national legislation (e. g. Slovakia and Finland). In other countries, social entrepreneurship is not yet officially regulated (e. g. the Czech Republic and Austria). The definition of social entrepreneurship according to EMES (research network of university

research centres and individual researchers of social enterprise) is widely recognized in the EU countries [2] (*Table 1*).

The definition provided above suggests that social entrepreneurship is based on two sets of principles – economic and social, and the emphasis is placed on the role of stakeholders.

Social Entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic

Currently, the Czech Republic lacks formal legislative regulation of social entrepreneurship. For this reason, an unofficial definition created by the non-profit organization TESSEA², inspired by the definition of EMES (introduced above), is used in the Czech Republic. This definition recommends the principles and indicators which should a social enterprise comply with (*Table 2*). The definition is intended primarily for the allocation of subsidies and not for including social enterprises in the indicative database administered by the Czech

Table 1. The definition of social entrepreneurship according to EMES

Economic principles	
The principle	Explanation of the principle
a) continuous activity; production, sale of goods and provision of services	Operating in market of the goods and services is one of the main goals of the social enterprise.
b) a high degree of autonomy	Social enterprises are not the entities managed by public authorities or other organizations.
c) a significant level of economic risk	Those who establish a social enterprise assume totally or partly the risk inherent in the initiative.
d) a minimum amount of paid work	The activity carried out in social enterprises requires a minimum level of paid workers.
Social principles	
e) an explicit aim to bring a benefit to the community	The main goal of the social enterprise is to serve society as the whole or to a certain group of people.
f) the initiative launched by a group of citizens	The social enterprise is the result of a joint effort of citizens who share the idea of pursuing a socially beneficial goal.
g) one member = one vote	The decision-making power is not derived from corporate capital.
h) a participatory nature, which involves various parties affected by the activity	The impact of the stakeholders on decision making in a social enterprise.
i) a limited profit distribution	Social enterprises are non-profit organizations or enterprises in which any profit is redistributed only to a limited extent.
Source: EMES.	

² Definition and Principles of Social Enterprise, TESSEA. Available at: <http://www.tessea.cz/tessea-o-nas/definice-a-principy-socialniho-podnikani>

Table 2. The principles of social entrepreneurship according to TESSEA

Principle	Meaning
Social impact	Implementation of activities beneficial for society or a specific group of disadvantaged people
	Employing of disadvantaged people in the labour market (in case of WISE)
Economic impact	Possible profit is used for further development of an enterprise
	Autonomy in management decision-making
	Sales from the sale of own products and services must form at least a part of the revenue
	Ability to manage economic risks
Environmental impact and impact on local society	Taking into consideration the environmental impacts of business activities of the enterprise
	Cooperation of the social enterprise with local entities
Source: TESSEA.	

Table 3. The indicators for social enterprises according to TESSEA

Area	Indicator
Social	Employees are regularly and systematically informed of activities of the enterprise, its revenues and implementation of socially beneficial activity
	People from disadvantaged groups form at least 30 % of all employees (in the case of WISE)
Economic	At least 50 % of profit is used for further development of the enterprise and its socially beneficial objectives
	In its decision making, the management is not dependent on other entities.
	Sales from the sale of own products and services form at least 30 % of the total revenue
	The enterprise uses one of the standard methods of economic management or risk management
Environment and local society	The enterprise has formulated principles of environmentally friendly policy and fulfils them in practice
	The enterprise communicates and cooperates with local entities
Source: TESSEA.	

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (listing in the database is voluntary). The principles and indicators are recorded in the following tables:

The following *table 3* contains indicators that specify the implementation of the principles.

The research carried out in the Czech Republic in 2018 by the authors of this article suggests that WISE are the most frequented type of social enterprises. Czech WISE focus predominantly on the integration of disabled people back into society by giving them job opportunities (Kročil, Dopita, Pospíšil, [3]). At the same time, the research showed that in 2018, there was an excess supply over the demand for work of disabled people. That suggests even higher importance of the existing WISE as without them the excess supply would be even more significant.

According to TESSEA³, there are currently 300 social enterprises operating in the Czech Republic and 90% of them have the character of WISE. 80% of these companies focus on the integration of people with disabilities – in 2018 they employed almost 4,000 such disadvantaged people (according to Czech Labour Office⁴, in December 2019 there were 33,000 unemployed disabled people in the labour market). However, in the Czech Republic, the concept of social entrepreneurship is still being developed and lacks, for example, systematic public support and regulation. In addition, the total number of social enterprises operating in the Czech

³ *Questionnaire Survey of Social Enterprises*, TESSEA. Available at: <http://www.tessea.cz/aktuality/528-dotaznikove-setreni-socialnich-podniku-2019>

⁴ *Unemployment Statistics, Czech Labour Office*. Available at: <https://www.mpsv.cz/web/cz/statistiky#statistiky-o-trhu-prace>

Republic is low and thus, the concept of social entrepreneurship cannot reach its potential. To accelerate this development, raising awareness of social entrepreneurship among the Czech population may be important. In this research we focus on two selected groups of people within Czech population – these are disabled people as typical employees of Czech social enterprises and Czech university students of humanities as potential founders of new social enterprises. The relationship between social entrepreneurship on the one hand, and university students and people with disabilities on the other, is supported by the following Literature Review.

Literature review

Following literature review is divided into three parts. The first part provides definition and characteristics of WISE™ the concept of social entrepreneurship prevalent in the Czech Republic and in European countries. In the second part, the connection between social entrepreneurship and disabled people integration is discussed. The third part reveals the position of university students as potential social entrepreneurs.

Definition and characteristics of European WISE

The literature approaches the field of WISE from various perspectives. A significant contribution to WISE research in Europe was made by experts from EMES network. Defourny and Nyssens [4] mention that social enterprises can be active in many areas as meeting the socially beneficial objective relates to a wide range of activities. However, so-called integration social enterprises, commonly called WISE (Work Integration Social Enterprise) are dominant in Europe. The authors suggest, that the lasting structural unemployment in some groups, limitations to traditionally perceived active labour-market policies and

the increasingly needed innovative policies in this area bring questions concerning the role of a social entrepreneur in combating the unemployment and support of employment opportunities. To help unemployed people with a low qualification who are facing permanent labour market exclusion is exactly the objective of work integration of social enterprises. Social enterprises integrate these people into society providing the possibility to engage in productive activity.

Davister, Defourny and Gregoire [5] describe the integration social enterprises as autonomous economic subjects whose main objective is the professional integration or persons facing employment difficulties. The integration happens through a productive activity or training aimed to increase the qualification of the disadvantaged persons. According to the cited experts, the most frequent activities WISE focus on are manual works, waste treatment, greenery maintenance or packaging works.

Davister, Defourny and Gregoire [5] distinguish four main types of social enterprises according to the way they integrate persons.

- Temporary employment – the focus in on providing the target group with work experience (temporary employment) or training at the workplace with the purpose to integrate these disadvantaged workers at the open labour market. The target persons participate in traineeships or are employed for a fixed period.
- Creating a permanent work position financed by the social enterprise – the objective of this type of integration is to create work positions for the labour market disadvantaged persons which are stable and economically sustainable in the mid-term horizon. In the initial phase, the public subsidies are used to finance the work position and these subsidies balance the insufficient productivity of the

target group. These subsidies are temporary and the amount of subsidy decreases when the workers become competitive in the labour market. After this interim phase, the integration social enterprises pay the wage of the employees from own resources (mainly from their revenues).

- Professional integration supported by permanent subsidies – In the case of the most disadvantaged persons the integration of which would be difficult in a mid-term horizon, these people are provided with stable work positions permanently financed from public resources.

- Socialisation through productive activity – The aim of the last type of integration enterprise is not the professional integration into the open labour market (however, it is not excluded) but rather social rehabilitation of the target groups through social contact, complying with roles, improvement of lifestyle, etc. The enterprises of this type work mainly with people with serious social problems (alcohol and drug-addicted, former convicts) or the people with a serious physical or mental handicap.

Spear and Bidet [6] provide several views on WISE:

- The amount of financing of the social enterprise from public sources – that means if whether the financing from the public sources is permanent, temporary or whether the enterprise is only self-financed.

- The type of employment the social enterprise provides to the disadvantaged persons – in that case, the authors distinguish permanent and temporary employment.

- The emphasis the social enterprise places on the training of the employees.

Davister, Defourny and Gregoire [5] describe the types of social enterprises from the financial perspective in a similar way.

In European countries, WISE have a strong position among other types of social enterprises.

According to Adam, Aviles, Ferrari, Amstutz, Crivelli, Enrico, Gafner, Greppi, Schmitz, Wüthrich and Zoebeli [7], as in other countries, WISE is currently the dominant and more visible model of social enterprises in Switzerland. WISE's dominant position among other types of social enterprises in a number of European countries is confirmed for example by Greblikaite, Sroka and Grants [8] in the case of Poland and by Asmalovskij and Sadilek [9] in the case of Slovakia and the Czech Republic. As stated by the authors, in the Czech Republic, social entrepreneurship is often perceived as the employment of disabled or otherwise disadvantaged people. According to Anastasiadis [10], WISE in Austria correspond to a high degree to the international understanding of social enterprises as they display the social, economic and governance-related dimensions of social enterprises such as are outlined in the EMES approach, and they pursue a specific social mission of work integration.

Social Enterprises and Disabled People in the Labour Market

Disabled people are one of the groups of disadvantaged people who can be supported by WISE. Shier, Graham and Jones [11] dealt with the employment of disabled persons. They carried out individual and group interview with 56 disabled. The interviews revealed that the disabled persons face discrimination and it is difficult for them to find and retain the job. Thornton [12] described the inequalities between the disabled and non-disabled persons in the context of employment – she points out that discrimination of disabled people during the selection process of applicants often exists and that the non-disabled candidates were 150 per cent more likely to gain a positive reply than the disabled candidates.

Social enterprises as the partners of disabled persons were the research subject of Harris, Renko and Caldwell [13; 14]. According to the authors, if supported adequately, social entrepreneurship is an employment option that can lead to economic self-sufficiency, assist broader economic growth, and support businesses that address the social problems affecting people with disabilities. The connection between social entrepreneurship and social inclusion of disabled persons was made by Hall and Wilton [15], Shaheen [16] and Buhariwala, Wilton and Evans [17] and Smith, McVilly, McGillivray and Chan [18]. According to the authors, social enterprise can deliver higher wages, and extend to otherwise disadvantaged and marginalised individuals the dignity and respect of 'real work for real pay. Based on the research of Kummitha [19], the WISE approach helped the excluded sections to gain access to dignified livelihood and to attain quite active participation in mainstream society. Both economic and social empowerment were identified as positive results from such initiatives. Especially through professional integration, the excluded regain dignity by participating in employment and social activities. Regaining dignity has connections to the social ties that such individuals can rebuild during the process.

The presented research supports the importance of WISE in the inclusion process of disabled people into society. For disabled people, it is necessary to be informed about the opportunities that WISE offer. For this reason, we decided to contribute to existing literature and to reveal if Czech disabled people are familiar with social entrepreneurship concept and how they perceive their situation in the labour market which could be improved by WISE.

University students as future social entrepreneurs

As the second group of social enterprises key stakeholders, we have selected university students. To support the legitimacy of our position to include university students as potential social entrepreneurs, we have performed a review of relevant scientific literature on university students' intentions to become social entrepreneurs and their knowledge about the concept.

Franco, Haase and Lautenschläger [20] compared entrepreneurial intentions of university students in eastern and western Germany and also in central Portugal. They revealed that most of the respondents are so-called potential founders – they do not exclude the possibility of being self-employed. The largest number of students considering to become entrepreneurs (so-called founders) is in Portugal. According to Ashour [21], a significant number of higher education students in the United Arab Emirates have positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship as career options. The research revealed that 38% of students expressed an interest in becoming entrepreneurs and 23.3% expressed an interest in becoming social entrepreneurs. Students' intentions to become social entrepreneurs were also researched by Kedmenec, Rebernik and Peric [22]. The authors found out almost 70 per cent of the respondents (Croatian university students) intend to start a venture in the next ten years. Half of those respondents show a tendency toward commercial entrepreneurship, while the other half prefers social entrepreneurship. Ip, Wu, Liu and Liang [23] argue that university students are our society's future, and because of that they should be encouraged to treasure environmental resources and help disadvantaged people. The study of Barton,

Schaefer and Canavati [24] shows that more than half of American business students who were interviewed reported social entrepreneurial intentions.

According to one of the latest research focused on Russian university students' knowledge of social entrepreneurship (Kireeva, Zavyalov, Saginova and Zavyalova [25]), only 34.8% of respondents are familiar with the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, students' knowledge of social entrepreneurship and students' intentions to become entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs in the Czech context are not analysed in the literature. This fact provides an opportunity for this research, which can contribute to a better understanding of this topic. The methodological approach to our research is described in the next section.

Article Objective and Research Questions

The aim of the paper is to explore the awareness and attitudes of selected groups of people - possible SE stakeholders towards social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic. In our research, these groups of people are Czech disabled persons and Czech university students of humanities. We focus on these groups, because:

- Disabled people are the largest group of disadvantaged persons in the Czech labor market and increasing their awareness of social entrepreneurship can support their further involvement in this concept and thus improve the overall situation of these people in the labor market. For disabled people, it is necessary to be informed about the opportunities that SE offer. For this reason, we decided to contribute to existing literature and to reveal if Czech disabled people are familiar with social entrepreneurship concept. In addition, we tried to find out how these people perceive their situation in the labour market. A possible difficult situation can be solved by

the establishment of new social enterprises (especially by WISE), which, according to previous research (for example, Kročil, Dopita, Pospíšil, [3]), make a significant contribution to the integration of disadvantaged people.

As presented in literature review, university students often have social entrepreneurial intentions and they would become the founders of new social enterprises. Especially students of humanities who, based on their study direction, could be interested in social innovations, can respond to the situation of disadvantaged people in the labor market and develop new social enterprises (including WISEs) that will contribute to solving societal problems in the field of unemployment.

To achieve the aim stated above, the following research questions were defined:

Q1: To what extent do Czech university students and people with disabilities know of the existence of social entrepreneurship concept and how are they able to define it?

Q2: Do Czech university students consider starting businesses with social purposes and helping integrate disadvantaged people back into society?

Q3: How Czech disabled people perceive their position in the current labour market?

Methodological approach

Within this research, we consider as potential entrepreneurs the students of the first year of humanities-focused programs of the Department of Applied economics, Palacky University Faculty of Arts. After finishing their studies, these individuals will decide whether their income will come from an employment or entrepreneurial activity. If they chose the second option, they will also need to determine their business goals. At the same time, their study focus on humanities could contribute to increased interest in social innovations. 106 students out of 146 enrolled in the researched first year filled the questionnaire.

The survey results do not take into account the respondents' gender as the authors do not consider this factor as relevant to the objective of the survey. The structured questionnaire was provided in the paper form.

The first-year students were chosen on purpose as the students of higher study years meet the term social entrepreneurship in their courses. This would negatively influence the research results as the assessment of the initial awareness of students starting the university studies is one of the research outputs.

The disabled persons, who are potential employees of social enterprises, were provided with the questionnaire in the electronic form using the platform Survio. This questionnaire was shared through the social networks profiles of the Chart 77 Foundation the main project of which is the fund-raising campaign Konto Bariéry focusing on the improvement of life of disabled persons and their integration to society, and Brno based association Liga vozíčkářů, z.ú. In this case, gender was not taken into

account as well. 102 disabled persons filled the questionnaire. For the form of distribution of the questionnaires, it is impossible to determine the total population.

Of course, the possibility that the social entrepreneur, that means the social enterprise founder can be a person from the disadvantaged group or disabled person is not excluded. However, from the perspective of this research, disadvantaged persons are primarily considered as the employees of social enterprises. There is also a possibility that during the survey the surveyed student was at the same time a disabled person or that the interviewed person was at the same time the student of a humanities-focused programme of the Department of Applied Economics, Faculty of Arts, Palacky University Olomouc.

The students of humanities programmes of the Department of Applied Economic – the potential social entrepreneurs/founders of social enterprises were asked to answer the following questions (*Table 4*).

Table 4. Questions for university students

Question	Type of question
Do you consider becoming an entrepreneur or founding an enterprise in your future professional life?	The closed-ended question, answer YES - NO
Regardless of the fact whether you want to do business or set up an enterprise, can you imagine following a social purpose as a part of your business activity?	The closed-ended question, answer YES - NO
If yes, what would be the subject matter of such social purpose?	An open-ended question, free answer
Have you ever heard the term "social entrepreneurship"?	The closed-ended question, answer YES – NO
If yes, please try to describe briefly what does this term mean or what is your understanding of this term?	An open-ended question, free answer
Do you know any particular social enterprise? If yes, please provide its name or at least the area of its activities	A combination of closed and open-ended questions

Table 5. Questions for disabled people

Question	Type of question
According to your opinion, is it difficult to find employment as a disabled person in the current labour market?	The closed-ended question, answer YES – NO
Do you perceive the number of work positions interesting for disabled persons as sufficient?	The closed-ended question, answer YES – NO
Have you ever heard the term "social entrepreneurship"?	The closed-ended question, answer YES – NO
If yes, please try to describe briefly what does this term mean or what is your understanding of this term?	An open-ended question, free answer
Do you know any particular social enterprise? If yes, please provide its name or at least the area of its activities.	A combination of closed-ended and open questions

Disabled persons were asked to answer the following five questions:

Results

Responses of Czech university students – potential social entrepreneurs

Question 1

More than half of the questioned students consider becoming an entrepreneur or setting up a business (*Table 6*). This result is in line with the research of Kedmenec, Rebernik and Peric [22]. According to these authors, the majority of Croatian students expressed the intention to start an entrepreneurship career. On the other hand, the study of Ashour [21] and Franco, Haase and Lautenschläger [20], Czech university students show more interest in becoming entrepreneurs than students in the United Arab Emirates, or in Germany and Portugal.

Question 2

More than half of the questioned students can imagine following a social purpose and not only the profit in their future business activity (*Table 7*). This result is important for the development of new social enterprises in the Czech Republic as the most of respondents are willing to follow the main social entrepreneurship principle which is to help the society and not just to reach the profit.

Table 6. Am I considering becoming an entrepreneur or setting up a business?

Answer	In absolute terms	In relative terms
YES	56 persons	53 %
NO	50 persons	47 %
Source: Own research.		

Table 7. Can I imagine following a social purpose in my business activity?

Answer	In absolute terms	In relative terms
YES	70 persons	66 %
NO	36 persons	34 %
Source: Own research.		

Our result is line with previous research done by Barton, Schaefer and Canavati [24]. These authors concluded that more than half of the American business students they interviewed reported social entrepreneurial intentions. In comparison with Ashour’s research [21], our respondents show more interest in the unconventional business.

Question 3

60 out of 70 persons who responded positively to the previous question further specified the nature of a social purpose that they would plan to follow in their business activities.

Some of them provided more purposes. The structure of the purposes is shown in the following *figure 1*. Purposes such as helping disadvantaged groups of people and the creation of new work positions are typical for the nature of WISE. However, the most common purpose mentioned by Czech university students is the environmental protection and improvement which is important especially for environmental social enterprises.

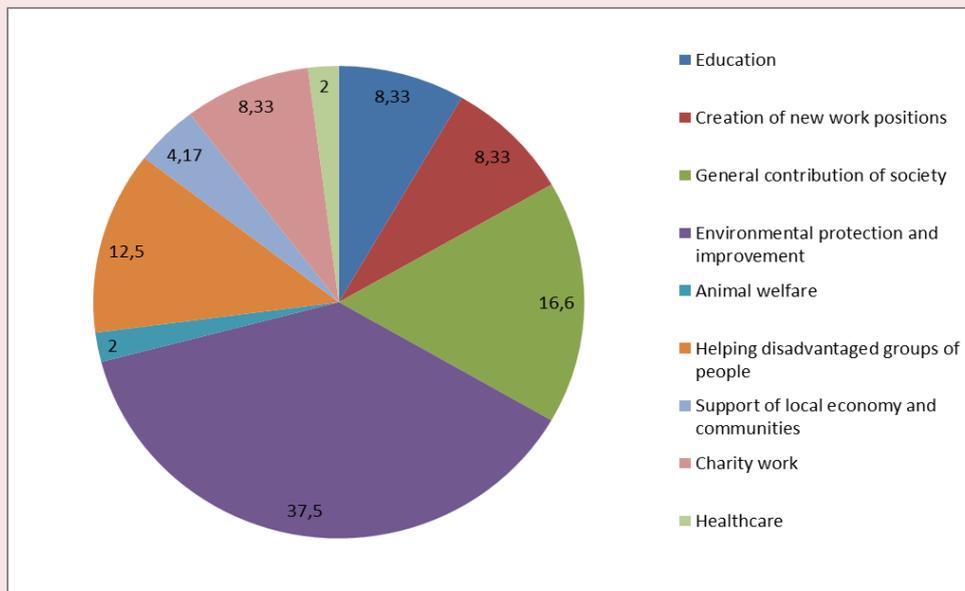
Question 4

Surprisingly for us, the majority of students responded that they had never heard of the term “Social entrepreneurship” (*Table 8*). In comparison with the research done by Kireeva, Zavyalov, Saginova and Zavyalova [25], our respondents are less familiar with the concept of social entrepreneurship than the Russian university students. This result does not support the development of new WISE founded by students and it would be the suggestion for the Czech education system to acquaint students with the concept of social entrepreneurship.

Table 8. Do the students know that the concept of social entrepreneurship exists?

Answer	In absolute terms	In relative terms
YES	25 persons	24 %
NO	81 persons	76 %
Source: Own research.		

Figure 1. What could be the subject matter of a social purpose followed by the questioned students? (in % of the total number of mentioned purposes)



Source: Own research.

Question 5

22 students tried to define the concept of social entrepreneurship (21% of all questioned persons, *Table 9*).

Table 9. The features of social entrepreneurship defined by the questioned students (based on answers of 22 students)

Features	In absolute terms	In relative terms
Profit + social purpose	17 persons	76 %
Social purpose	4 persons	18 %
Establishing of a specific type of enterprise	1 person	6 %

Source: Own research.

The majority of the students connects social entrepreneurship with achieving profit and at the same time a social purpose. The mentioned respondents perceive these two principles as interconnected. We can evaluate these answers as correct – both sets of principles (economic and social) are covered in these answers. Fewer students mentioned only the

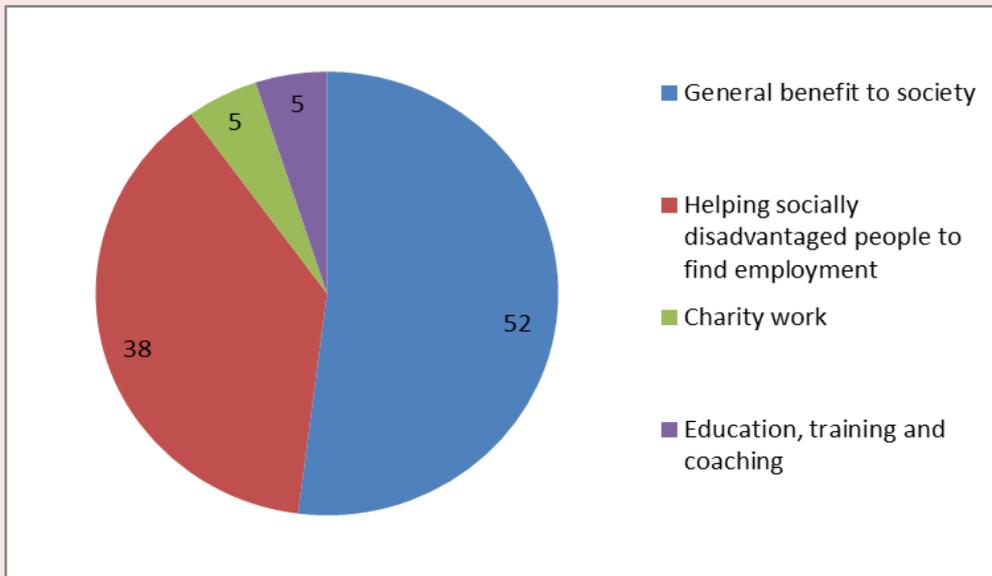
aspect of following a social purpose without an effort to make a profit. One questioned student did not generalise the features of social entrepreneurship. The student only suggested that it could be for example establishing a home for elderly people.

As the table shows, 21 respondents mentioned a social purpose as a feature of social entrepreneurship. More than half of the questioned did not provide any specification. These students only mentioned that it was an activity which was generally beneficial to society. However, some respondents defined social purpose in a more concrete way (*Figure 2*). It is evident that students specify the main goal of social enterprises as „general benefit to society“ and „helping disadvantaged people to find employment“. The second objective follows the idea of WISE.

Question 6

11 students provided at least one name of a possible social enterprise. In total, the students

Figure 2. Social purpose as the feature of social entrepreneurship and its achieving according to the responses of questioned students (in %; the base are the responses of 21 students)



Source: Own research.

mentioned 17 names of the enterprises. As shows the graph (Figure 3), some names were mentioned repetitively.

The following section of this chapter provides commented answers of the Czech disabled people who were asked for five questions.

The responses of the Czech disabled people
Question 1

The majority of questioned people believe that it is difficult to find employment as a disabled person. (Table 10). This result is in line with the conclusion made by Shier, Graham and Jones [11] who reported that it is difficult for disabled people to get and retain their job. Establishing new social enterprises

Table 10. According to the opinion of the questioned persons, it is difficult to find employment as a disabled person.

Answer	In absolute terms	In relative terms
YES	91 persons	89 %
NO	11 persons	11 %
Source: Own research		

(WISE especially) may be particularly useful in overcoming these obstacles.

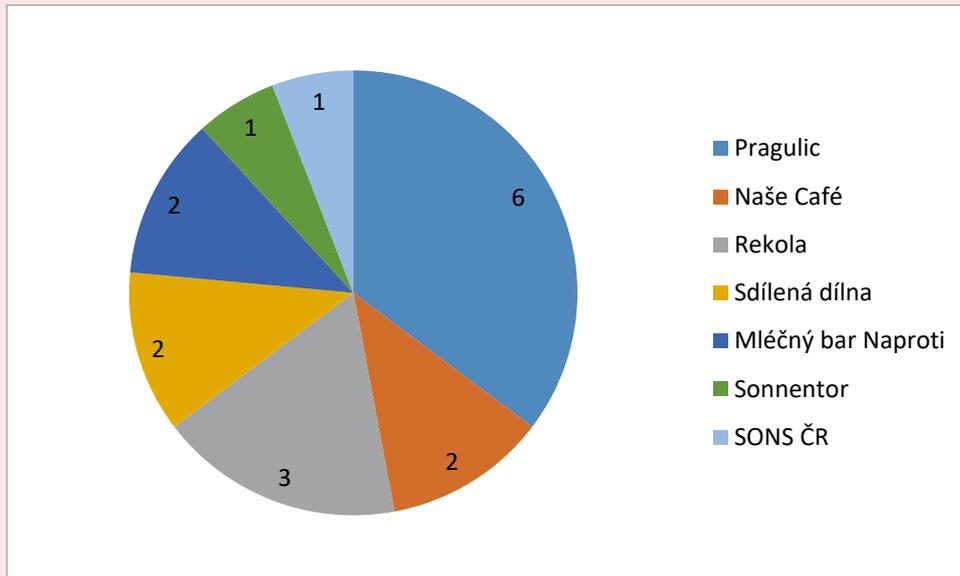
Question 2

The majority of the respondents are convinced that the current labour market does not provide enough work positions suitable for disabled persons (Table 11). In 2018, Czech WISE provided work for almost 4,000 disabled people. According to the Czech Labour Office, in December 2019 there were 33,000 unemployed disabled people in the labour market. Without existing Czech WISE, this number would have increased by 12%. In the case of new WISE establishing, the current labour market situation could be further improved.

Table 11. Do the questioned persons perceive the number of work positions interesting for disabled persons as sufficient?

Answer	In absolute terms	In relative terms
YES	20 persons	20 %
NO	82 persons	80 %
Source: Own research		

Figure 3. Names of possible social enterprises provided by the questioned students (in absolute values)



Source: Own research.

Question 3

A slight majority of the questioned persons responded that they had never heard of the term “Social entrepreneurship” (Table 12). Same as in the case of the students’ answers, this is a surprising finding for us.

Table 12. Do the disabled persons know about the existence of the concept of social entrepreneurship?

Answer	In absolute terms	In relative terms
YES	47 persons	46 %
NO	55 persons	54 %

Source: Own research.

Question 4

57% of all respondents tried to characterise the term “social entrepreneurship” Only two persons mentioned that social entrepreneurship interconnected two objectives – making a profit and pursuing of a societally beneficial purpose. The majority of the respondents defined this concept as the business with a societally beneficial objective and almost one fifth

as an entrepreneurial activity of disabled people (Table 13).

Table 13. The characteristics of social entrepreneurship defined by the disabled persons (based on answers of 57 respondents)

Features	In absolute terms	In relative terms
Profit + societally beneficial objective	2 persons	4 %
Societally beneficial objective	45 persons	77 %
Entrepreneurial activity of disabled persons	11 persons	19 %

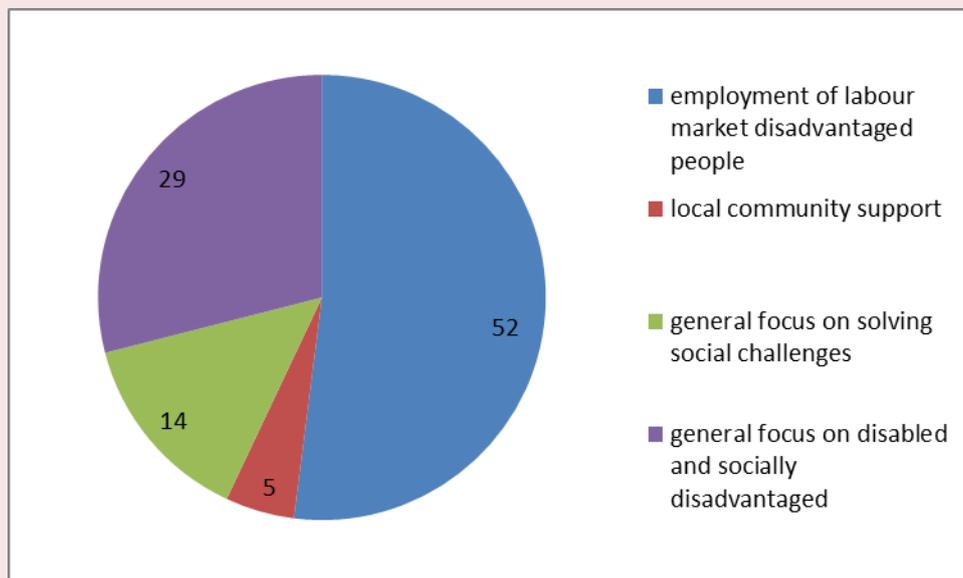
Source: Own research.

Fulfilling an objective which specifically or generally contributes to society appeared in the respondents of 47 respondents. The graph show structure of the responses (Figure 4).

Question 5

17 respondents provided at least one name of a possible social enterprise. In total, the respondents mentioned 18 names of the enterprises. One name was mentioned repetitively. For this reason, the enterprises are not showed in the graph but in the form of a list (Table 14).

Figure 4. Societally beneficial objective as the feature of social entrepreneurship and its pursuing according to the responses of questioned disabled persons (in %; the base are the responses of 47 disabled persons)



Source: Own research.

Table 14. Possible social enterprises mentioned by disabled people

Enterprise name	Enterprise name
Naše café	Černí koně
2p servis	Trend vozíčkářů
Ashoka	Help me Hand
Helpnu Ti	Lipka
Senior Teplice	Bárka Kafe
Ergotep (included in two responses)	Café na půl cesty
Učebnice Vaniček	Kačaba
Smero	Myjómi
Podané ruce	Kolibřík

Source: Own research.

Limitations of the Research

Although the research presents original results and its conclusions can be used in practice (for example by universities in their educational activities or by non-profit organizations helping disabled people), it still has its limitations. First, the research sample could be extended to students of other universities, which would allow a better generalization of the conclusions.

Second, the research does not focus on some other possible stakeholders of social enterprises, whose awareness and attitudes would also be appropriate to examine. These stakeholders are, for example, representatives of public administration bodies who can play an important role in the development of social entrepreneurship. Third, the research is descriptive in nature and does not answer the question of the relationship between respondents' characteristics and their awareness and attitudes towards social entrepreneurship. These limits offer room for further research.

Conclusion and Discussion

This research aimed to explore the awareness and attitudes of selected groups of people – possible SE stakeholders towards social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic. We based our findings on the results of the questionnaire survey among possible social enterprises' stakeholders – Czech university students and disabled persons. We also tried to find out

how disabled people perceive their situation in the labour market. A possible difficult situation can be solved by the establishment of new social enterprises (especially by WISE), which, according to previous research, make a significant contribution to the integration of disadvantaged people.

According to our findings, the level of awareness of the concept of social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic is generally low. In the case of both groups of respondents, the majority of them never heard of social entrepreneurship and when compared, the level of awareness is better in the group of disabled persons. We consider these findings to be negative in terms of higher involvement of disabled people in social entrepreneurship. It is useful for people with disabilities to know about the existence and nature of social entrepreneurship, which can help integrate them into society. As a practical contribution of our article, we suggest that the Czech educational system (both secondary and university) should include the topic of social entrepreneurship into its study plans – in the form of practical workshops, as part of existing subjects or in the newly developed specialized courses. In the case of disabled people, it could be the role of the Czech social policy and non-profit organizations helping disabled people (such as The Czech National Disability Council) to increase their knowledge.

Approximately 20% of the questioned students tried to define social entrepreneurship, while there were 50% of the disabled persons who answered the same question. The cumulative results differ as well. The majority of responding students are aware of the objective to make a profit which is necessary for social entrepreneurship. The absolute majority of disabled persons did not mention this objective and focused their answers only to the idea of following a social purpose, which is only

one of the important characteristics of social entrepreneurship. As shows table no. 1, an integral part of the definition of social enterprise are the economic principles represented by the effort to make a profit or, in the case of not-for-profit social enterprises, at least by the production of products and delivery of services. According to the EMES definition, for-profit and not-for-profit social enterprises engage in economic activity. This fact was omitted by the majority of disabled respondents. In the majority of cases, the students who mentioned the profit-making did not omit the social purpose.

We can say that both students and disabled persons often relate social entrepreneurship to its integration role, although it is only one of the possible objectives of social enterprises. In the majority of cases, the students mentioned a social purpose only in a general way and did not specify it. However, in second place the students mentioned the objective of employment or helping to the labour-market disadvantaged people. In the first place, disabled people linked the social purpose of enterprises with the employment of disadvantaged persons.

As part of the questioning, both students and disabled persons mentioned names of 24 enterprises which they consider to be social. However, the question is whether these enterprises are social enterprises. 10 out of these 24 subjects claim to be a social enterprise on their web pages or by the fact that they are listed in the database of social enterprises administered by the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Many enterprises considered by the respondent as social do not provide this information on their web page or through the listing in the database of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. However, there can be at least identified the purpose to employ the labour-market disadvantaged persons.

The willingness of university students to become entrepreneurs or to start a business and consider pursuing a societally beneficial objective is very important for further development of social entrepreneurship and integration of disabled people. From this perspective, social entrepreneurship including WISE has a potential of its further development as the majority of respondents responded positively to both questions. Our findings are in line with previous research and support the idea of university students as a group of potential social enterprise founders. University students need to increase their knowledge of social entrepreneurship during their studies. However, they must understand not only the benefits of this type of entrepreneurship but also the threats and risks associated with it.

The absolute majority of disabled respondents reported that it is difficult to find employment as a disabled person and that the current labour market does not offer enough vacant positions which could be interesting for these people. Knowledge of existing difficult position of Czech disabled people in the current labour market could be an impulse for

establishing new social enterprises (especially WISE) in the Czech Republic. From this perspective, we can assess the importance of further development of social enterprises (especially WISE) as very significant. On average, one Czech WISE employs almost 15 disabled people. The establishing of new WISE would help in meeting the work needs of people with disabilities.

As a topic for the discussion and further research what suggest to focus on the causes of low awareness of social entrepreneurship among questioned persons. One of the possible reasons can be the fact that in the Czech Republic, so far there is not in force any law regulating social entrepreneurship. Such a law exists in many countries of the European Union. We see an opportunity to carry out similarly oriented research in some of these states to find out whether the level of awareness differs from the results presented in this article. Another research topic could focus on the space given to the topic of social entrepreneurship in the study programmes of humanities-focused institutions of higher education or lower level of education.

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