InnoSocial

Mainstreaming Inclusive Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship in Higher Education

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Piloting of the Course in II&SE
Country report

University of Social Sciences
Poland

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Piloting of the course in Inclusive Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship

Country report - University of Social Sciences / Poland

1. Basic information

1.1	*Partner organization*: University of Social Sciences
1.2	*Number of participants at the beginning of the course*: 24 Number of students who successfully completed the course __100%__ (min 90%) Number of Trainers:
1.3	*Students: Male: 13 Female: 10 Other: I don't want to specify:1*
1.4	*Number of the Students by age:* *18-20: 0* *21-25: 12* *25-30: 11* *31 and more: 1*
	Number of Trainers by age: *51 and more:* 1
1.5	*Student's specialties and grades:* International Business Management *The students participating in the pilot training specialized in International Business Management. Their academic backgrounds provided a solid foundation for understanding social entrepreneurship concepts, particularly in the context of sustainable business development and global market integration.*
1.6	*Trainers Position at the HEI:* *The training instructor, Dr. Grzegorz Mazurkiewicz, holds a PhD in Management and has been collaborating with the University of Social Sciences since 2013. His extensive experience in enterprise management and academic teaching ensured a well-structured and engaging learning process for the participants. He is a subject matter expert in international projects, collaborating with higher education institutions and non-profit organizations. The instructor collaborates with many universities and is also a consultant for setting curriculum frameworks in secondary schools. The combination of teaching and scientific experience with experience in the business and social environment provided a solid foundation for conducting the training on social economy.*

1.7	*Information on the students' selection procedures* *The selection process focused on students enrolled in the IBM master's program, particularly those demonstrating interest in social entrepreneurship. The participants were chosen based on their academic performance, motivation, and willingness to engage in interactive learning experiences.*
1.8	*Information about pilot course organization, implementation* *The training was designed to provide both theoretical and practical insights into social entrepreneurship. Participants received preliminary materials outlining the project's objectives and key theoretical concepts. The course was conducted in an interactive format, encouraging discussions, peer collaboration, and knowledge exchange. This approach allowed students to engage actively and apply theoretical concepts to real-world contexts.*
1.9	*Information about ideas presentation to stakeholders event (min 1 external stakeholder has to be involved)*
1.10	*Analysis of assessment results (min. 80% of the Pilot training participants, who successfully completed the Course, demonstrate improved knowledge, skills and competences in the subject of the training, measured through the analysis of assessment results (based on the assessment tools available in the Syllabus).* The training participants demonstrated an activity and level of interest that exceeded expectations. Given that they represented various countries and continents, they also had the opportunity to compare solutions present in their respective nations (social entrepreneurship is understood and perceived differently in each). During the course, participants had the opportunity to present their own ideas for running a social enterprise. The proposed concepts were evaluated by other participants in terms of their practical feasibility and potential to survive in a competitive market. The course participants accurately answered the questions included in the tasks and case studies.

2. Feedback from Students and Trainers on the InnoSocial Pilot Training

2.1	*Please, provide a summary/ analysis of responses to* ***Question 2.1*** The students indicated that they were satisfied with the training materials, with responses ranging from "yes" to "partly." There were no negative responses
2.2	*Please, provide a summary/ analysis of responses to* ***Question 2.2*** The students were satisfied with the quality of teaching, as evidenced by their survey responses as well as their active participation in the classes.
2.3	*Please, provide a summary/ analysis of responses to* ***Question 2.3*** Regarding the impact on professional development, the responses were also positive, with a few marked as "partly." Most students found the concept of social entrepreneurship appealing enough to consider it as a potential form of running their own business. The students were also

	encouraged to explore the possibilities of running a social enterprise in their own countries — the regulations in this area, forms of conducting such businesses, and potential opportunities for support during the initial phase of operation.
2.4	*Please, provide a summary/ analysis of responses to* ***Question 2.4*** All students agreed that they would recommend the training to other students. It was recognized that it would be valuable to introduce the specifics of the social economy into subjects such as entrepreneurship at universities. This form of activity was considered worth promoting as it serves a social purpose and enables obtaining financial and substantive support.
2.5	*Please, provide a summary/ analysis of responses to* ***Question 2.5*** In the surveys and during class discussions, students expressed interest in the workshop format, describing it as both practical and engaging. The surveys included suggestions to organize such workshops more frequently and to enhance them by incorporating a competitive element, such as a contest for the best social entrepreneurship ideas. Among the proposals was also the idea of inviting entrepreneurs running such businesses to share their successes and the challenges they faced in managing their companies. The students agreed that it would also be worth discussing cases of failures in running a social enterprise, so that they could learn "from others' mistakes" and avoid them in the future.

3. Lessons learnt and success stories

3.1	*Please, provide the "lessons learnt" as described by teachers and students in* ***Question 3.1*** *of the evaluation form (please, follow the structure given in the evaluation form)*: ***Indicate the area which the "lesson learnt" refers to:*** • Understanding the real-life application of social entrepreneurship models • Importance of teamwork and peer collaboration • Adapting global concepts to local contexts • Stakeholder mapping and engagement strategies • Learning from examples of social innovation • Role of the European Union in promoting value-based entrepreneurship Describe the situation or experience encountered during the pilot training: During the pilot course, students worked in international teams on the development of social business models. Many encountered challenges related to time planning, communication across different cultural backgrounds, and aligning diverse expectations within their groups. One participant from Poland noted that "at first it was hard to coordinate work with colleagues from different time zones and academic backgrounds, but by the end of the course, we had found a rhythm that worked for everyone." An important moment was the group assignment to design a social enterprise. One team combined ideas around environmental sustainability and refugee integration. Another group struggled at first to align on a shared vision but eventually merged two proposals — a food

	waste solution and a youth employment initiative — into a unified concept that satisfied both aims. ***Identify the outcomes of the situation or experience – what went well and/or what didn't:*** ***What worked well:*** • Students reported that working in mixed teams improved their intercultural communication skills and gave them a broader perspective on social challenges in different countries. • They successfully used the course framework (tools, lectures, templates) to design business models that included financial, environmental, and social value components. • Participants felt empowered to continue developing their ideas beyond the course, with several expressing interest in pitching them to local NGOs or competitions. ***Challenges included:*** • Some students found the theoretical part dense and initially struggled to see how it applied to their context. One student from Tunisia mentioned: "I wasn't sure how to implement the EU-based models in my region, but after group discussions, I realized how to adapt them to local structures." • Remote collaboration was sometimes difficult due to differing levels of technological fluency and group coordination. ***Analyse the reasons behind those outcomes (why it happened so):*** • The variety of professional and academic backgrounds contributed to creative discussions but also created friction at times. • Teams that established clear internal communication and division of roles early on performed better and reported higher satisfaction. • Students who actively participated in discussions and case study reviews tended to gain more from the experience and reported a deeper understanding of the subject matter. • Learning from European case studies (such as Perma Fungi) helped students connect abstract concepts with real-world applications, even if the cultural or market contexts were different. ***Summarize the key learnings in a clear and concise manner:*** • Working on real-world problems in diverse teams enhances both personal growth and professional competence. • Teamwork, clear communication, and task distribution are essential in social entrepreneurship development.

	• Social businesses can and should pursue financial sustainability without losing sight of social goals. ***Adapting global models to local realities requires flexibility and critical thinking.*** • EU-supported initiatives offer valuable frameworks and funding opportunities to turn socially-driven ideas into viable businesses. • Inspiration from best practices across Europe showed students how small-scale, community-rooted ideas can scale and have broad social impact. ***Impact of the key learnings on students' personal and/or professional development:*** • Many students expressed increased motivation to explore entrepreneurship as a career path. One student stated: "Before the course, I didn't see myself as a founder — now I do." • Participants reported increased confidence in presenting ideas publicly, as well as greater awareness of global sustainability challenges. • The majority of students emphasized that the experience gave them tools to act, not just reflect — from stakeholder analysis to business modeling. • One student concluded: "This course changed my mindset. I used to think in terms of business OR society — now I see they can grow together."
3.2	*Please, provide the "success stories " as described by teachers and students in* ***Question 3.2*** *of the evaluation form (please, follow the structure given in the evaluation form)*: ***Titles of the ideas:*** • Green Heat • SolarBox • Social Market Café • EduCycle ***Describe the problem that your idea addresses (provide details about the context of the problem):*** Green Heat: This project addresses the dual problem of excessive food waste and the lack of access to affordable, clean energy in rural areas. In many regions, organic waste is disposed of inefficiently, while at the same time, many low-income communities struggle with rising heating costs. The student behind this idea pointed out: "Where I come from, people throw away tons of food, while others burn trash to heat their homes."

	SolarBox: Access to electricity in remote areas is still unreliable or nonexistent. The problem identified was energy poverty and poor storage infrastructure. One team of students proposed creating an affordable, portable energy storage system for solar panels. “The idea was born from the reality in my village, where even if you have panels, you can’t use the power at night,” said a student from Georgia. Social Market Café: Several students were concerned with youth unemployment and social isolation in their city. They identified that many young people – especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds – lacked job experience and access to safe spaces. “There’s nowhere to go after school that feels productive. Many teens just hang out and do nothing,” said one participant. EduCycle: This idea addressed the issue of lack of environmental education among children. The student team noticed that local schools often lacked modern, interactive tools for teaching sustainability. “We wanted to create something fun and educational that could be used in schools to show how circular economy really works,” one student explained. ***Solution to this problem:*** Green Heat proposes the installation of small-scale biogas converters that process food waste from local restaurants and households into clean energy for heating. The project also includes a community education campaign about waste separation. The business model includes subscription-based waste collection and heat delivery. SolarBox is a compact, modular battery system designed to store solar energy for households and small businesses in off-grid areas. The system uses recycled materials and is assembled by local workers, promoting job creation. “It’s a technical solution with a social twist,” as the creators described it. Social Market Café would function as a coffee shop run by and for young people at risk of exclusion. It would offer part-time training and employment, creative workshops, and affordable meals made from surplus food. The café would collaborate with local farmers and NGOs. EduCycle is a mobile educational kit that includes hands-on activities and experiments showing the principles of recycling, composting, and sustainable design. The idea is to sell or donate the kits to schools and run workshops in collaboration with municipalities. ***Highlight what makes the idea unique:*** Green Heat combines two major issues – food waste and energy access – into a closed-loop system. Its uniqueness lies in its scalability and ability to be implemented in both rural and urban areas. SolarBox is not just a battery, but a social product assembled by vulnerable groups (e.g., unemployed youth or migrants), offering both technical and social innovation. Social Market Café integrates sustainability with community development, turning food surplus into opportunity and empowering young people.

	EduCycle is one of the few educational tools on the market that integrates sustainability, hands-on learning, and social entrepreneurship. ***Justify feasibility of implementing the idea:*** Each group analyzed their ideas in terms of cost, technical feasibility, stakeholder involvement, and impact. They applied the business model canvas during class and received feedback from their peers and the teacher. For example, the Green Heat project was based on existing biogas technologies already used in EU-funded rural development programs. Students identified local partners (restaurants, housing associations) who could provide waste and use the energy. SolarBox team noted that components for their prototype could be sourced from recycled devices, and training locals to build the boxes would reduce costs while increasing impact. Students from Social Market Café discussed possible partnerships with local municipalities, social foundations, and farmers – all of whom would benefit from reducing food waste and youth unemployment. EduCycle was seen as highly feasible due to its low production cost and strong alignment with local and EU educational goals. The team said: "We think we can get local funding or CSR support for our first 50 kits." ***Explain the impact of the solution on the society or the environment:*** All ideas aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as affordable clean energy, decent work, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, and quality education. Green Heat reduces landfill use and emissions, and offers low-cost energy to low-income households. SolarBox addresses energy poverty and boosts employment through local production. Social Market Café empowers marginalized youth and reduces food waste through circular food usage. EduCycle promotes environmental literacy and inspires young changemakers. The students emphasized that the training helped them move from theory to action. One participant said: "Before the course, I didn't think I could actually build something like this – now I believe I can."

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