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## OVERVIEW OF PILOT PROJECTS

Pilot projects within the Interreg DelFin project encourage the growth of social innovation and seek to meet the goals in business development at the regional level of each partner country.

Each pilot project seeks to ensure sustainable synergy of the system that encourages additional cooperation between local authorities of each country and their social entrepreneurs.

The last part of 2020 in the project was marked by the testing of the toolbox for the promotion of social entrepreneurship, and to encourage further development and sustainability of the participants' social businesses. The programme was welcomed by our entrepreneurs, as in most places there is no special support for social entrepreneurs, and they are left to their own devices on the local, national and regional market, to compete with 'regular', strictly profit-driven, businesses.

The promotion and testing of the chosen tools from the toolbox were organised through pilot projects in all four partner countries: Saalekreis region in Germany, Hajdu-Bihar in Hungary, Duga Resa - Karlovac in Croatia, and rural areas of Piedmont in Italy.

Overall, approximately 10 local social entrepreneurs and start-ups participated in each pilot.

Social entrepreneurs were able to benefit from group and individual mentoring sessions; coaching sessions that analysed their business model and plan; presentation of impact models; consultations in regard to development of individual funding and funding strategies. In Croatia and Germany, the pilot participants attended a crowdfunding workshop, as an additional contribution to the programme. In all partner countries, the pilots included both the already existing social enterprises and those that are only in the initial, pre-registration phase but intend to become a social enterprise.

In the pilots, tools on different topics are tested: advisory/education/networking (e.g. project-based learning or Crowdfunding Academy), acceleration/incubation (e.g. InnovAree, Community-based labs in rural areas; GrandUp!), training/coaching (e.g. CSIQ) financing, (e.g. a Scholarship, Microloan, Grants), evaluation (e.g. project plan pre-evaluation system).

Brodoto team

46  
programme  
participants

49 partners  
involved

## **INTERVIEWS WITH PILOT PARTICIPANTS: CASE STUDIES HUNGARY AND CROATIA**



**WHAT WORKED WELL DURING THE PILOT,  
WHICH TOOLS HAVE PROVED SUCCESSFUL?**



**HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED ANY BUSINESS  
PROBLEMS?**



**WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR SE IN YOUR  
OPINION?**



**WHAT WOULD YOU RECOMMEND TO  
FUTURE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS?**

## BALMAZ TÉSZTA (BALMAZ PASTA), HUNGARY



### WHAT WORKED WELL DURING THE PILOT, WHICH TOOLS HAVE PROVED SUCCESSFUL?

Due to the situation, we could “meet” the pilot project participants online only. The workshops were well organized and moderated very professionally. For me, this kind of meeting was completely unknown, but I adapted quickly. As the participants represented different social enterprises, we also learned a lot from each other. Invited speakers were also great.



### HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED ANY BUSINESS PROBLEMS?

If I have to summarize the answer in one sentence: there are always smaller or bigger problems. Our cooperative has been operating in its current form since 2016.

In 2015, the Municipality of Balmazújváros operated the pasta factory in the framework of public employment. At that time we were only making pasta and the municipality was doing the administrative tasks and paperwork. In 2016, we had to start and operate a social enterprise in such a way that we were not fully aware of the form of the cooperative, as the cooperatives formed from public employment have completely separate legal forms, new legislation and new legal definitions. What we could do was make dry pasta! We faced a lot of new tasks, we had to learn new things, everything that is required to run a successful social enterprise.

Before the pilot project, we already had nearly four years of experience, so we could no longer afford to still stumble. However, there are still minor problems.



image source: Balmaz Tészta webpage



image source: Balmaz Tészta webpage



## WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR SE IN YOUR OPINION?

The year 2020 is basically difficult for any business. The usual rhythm was overturned. We had to follow new rules. I don't think 2021 will be much different either. Financially we survived the year, but the problems are still here. The difficulties are the same as in 2020. The virus has left many people out of work, perhaps making it easier for us to find employees for our business. I think one of the biggest problems has always been finding the right workforce. A social enterprise may not be able to provide a marketable salary, but at the same time it is important to have a family-friendly, child-friendly workplace. Social enterprises, like any business, are full of challenges, we need to learn to eliminate them.



## WHAT WOULD YOU RECOMMEND FOR FUTURE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

Social enterprises while doing business, assert aspects of social justice in the economy. The basic principle of their operation is that economic, social and environmental aspects are equally important. A common problem for social enterprises is that although they are enthusiastic and committed to improving the social problem they undertake, a number of other competencies are lacking in order to operate truly effectively and sustainably.

It is essential to have the ability to plan, gather resources in addition to implementing professional knowledge. Within this, the ability to take calculated risks is extremely important!

However, in the case of social enterprises, an in-depth knowledge of the social problem is also essential. Personal involvement in a particular problem is an advantage, but not enough. The problems of different disability groups all require special expertise. And business knowledge is essential to enter a competitive market for a given product or service. Typically, for example, the promise of a price advantage is not a viable option for a social enterprise, so in general, the premium category, outstanding quality, can be the basis of a functioning strategy. Financial knowledge is essential in a business, but negotiation practice also helps a lot. Marketing and HR knowledge are also essential - all of which can be mastered over time, but it doesn't hurt if this knowledge is already present when starting a business.

## RENATA SALOPEK, CROATIA, SELTRON COMPUTER PROGRAMMING AND CONSULTING



### WHAT WORKED WELL DURING THE PILOT, WHICH TOOLS HAVE PROVED SUCCESSFUL?

The presentations delivered by the project team proved really successful. I especially want to congratulate Mr Siniša Begović, my mentor, who widened our horizons and expanded our knowledge on the subject. The information on the use of e-invoicing was certainly a step up in the right direction.



### HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED ANY BUSINESS PROBLEMS?

Business problems that arised during project implementation concerned conducting business transactions, issuing invoices and receipts - so when I found out we can use e-invoicing software, it helped a lot when it came to this.



### WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR SE IN YOUR OPINION?

Social entrepreneurship in Croatia is still in its infancy, and I believe most people don't know anything about the concept and its benefits for the society. There is a lack of public support for social entrepreneurs, a lack of funds for social entrepreneurs, and an underdeveloped social entrepreneurship market. I hope it develops and such entrepreneurs become generators of economic and social development.



## WHAT WOULD YOU RECOMMEND TO FUTURE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS?

Recommendation to future social entrepreneurs: be brave, surround yourself with like-minded people, put yourself on the market, with your ideas and projects.

image provided by the participant







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## UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- **Digital Social Summit** (29.-30.03.2021) **Type:** Online Event; Sponsor/organizer: Stiftung Bürgermut; **Theme:** Debate on value- and participation-oriented digitization for the civil society; **Link** <https://digital-social-summit.de/>
- **Impact Festival 2021** (23.-24.03.2021) **Type:** Online Event; Sponsor/organizer: Main Incubator; **Theme:** Innovative European start-ups with focus on sustainable solutions in the B2B market; **Link** <https://impact-festival.earth/>
- **European Social Economy Summit 2021** (26.-27.05.2021) **Type:** Online Event; Sponsor/organizer: European Commission and the City of Mannheim; **Theme:** Conference about digitalization of the social Economy, (social) innovation and cross-country and cross-sectorial collaboration; **Link** <https://www.euses2020.eu/>