

A View from inside: Case Study of Social Economy Actors in Croatia

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Abstract : Regarding social economy (SE), Croatia is, on general level, considered as ex-communist country with good tradition, bad performance in second part of 20th Century because of political control in the business sector, which has in transition period (1990-1999) became a problem of ignorance in public administration (policy level). Today, social economy in Croatia is trying to catch up with other EU states on all important levels of SE sector: legislative and institutional framework, financial infrastructure, education and capacity building, and visibility. All four are integral parts of Strategy for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Croatia for the period of 2015 - 2020. Within iPRESENT project, funded by Croatian Science Foundation, we have mapped social economy actors and after many years there is a clear and up to date social economy base. At the ICSE 2016 we will present main outcomes and results of this process. In the second year of the project we conducted a field research across Croatia carried out 19 focus groups with most influential, innovative and inspirational social economy actors. We divided interview questions in four themes: laws on social economy and public policies, definition/ideology of social economy and cooperation on SE scene, the level of democracy and working conditions, motivation and existence of intrinsic values. The data that are gathered through focus group interviews has been analysed via qualitative data analysis software (Atlas ti.). Major finding that will be presented in ICSE 2016 are: Social economy actors are mostly unsatisfied with legislative and institutional framework in Croatia and consider it as unsupportive and confusing. Social economy actors consider SE to be in the line with WISE model and as a tool for community development. The SE actors that are more active express satisfaction with cooperation amongst SE actors and other partners and stakeholders, but the ones that are in more isolated conditions (spatially) express need for more cooperation and networking. Social economy actors expressed their praise for democratic atmosphere in their organisations and fair working conditions. And finally, they expressed high motivation to continue to work in the social economy and are dedicated to the concept, including even those that were at the beginning interested just in getting a quick job. It means that we can detect intrinsic values for employees in social economy organisations. This research enabled us to describe for the first time in Croatia the view from the inside, attitudes and opinion of employees of social economy organisations.

Keywords : employees, focus groups, mapping, social economy

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