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## SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: KAZAKH WAY OF ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract.** *The relevance of the study is conditioned by a plenitude of difficulties that have a constraining influence on the development of social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan. The purpose of the study is to define the term "social entrepreneurship", to trace its differences with non-profit organisations. Therewith, it is necessary to understand what factors hinder the development of social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan and propose solutions to these problems. The leading approach to the study was the analysis of the experience of foreign countries in social entrepreneurship development, an overview of the problems faced by acting social entrepreneurs around the world, as well as the study of work experience of social entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan. The results of the study demonstrated that the main factors hindering the development of social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan are the lack of a legal framework regulating the activities of social entrepreneurs; lack of lending programs;*

*high level of taxation, etc. Ways of solving these problems were proposed: development of a legal form for social entrepreneurs; consolidation of the legal term, establishment of criteria and principles of social entrepreneurship; involvement of state and quasi-state organisations to support burgeoning social entrepreneurs, etc.*

**Keywords:** *social work, non-profit organisations, volunteers, public support.*

## **Introduction**

Currently, the term “social entrepreneurship” is understudied. According to J.G. Dees (2011), “We have always had social entrepreneurs, even if we did not call them that”. The terms “social entrepreneurship” and “social entrepreneur” were first mentioned in the 1960s and 1970s in the English-language literature devoted to social change issues. The popularisation of this term is attributed to Bill Drayton, who said: “Social entrepreneurs are not content just to give a fish or teach how to fish. They will not rest until they have revolutionised the fishing industry”.

The concept of social entrepreneurship is inextricably linked with the concept of entrepreneurship. The difficulty in determining social entrepreneurship is explained by several reasons. Firstly, there is a similarity with non-profit organisations, whose activities are funded by charity, volunteering, and donations. Secondly, since this is entrepreneurship, it is aimed at making a profit. Thus, social entrepreneurship, like ordinary entrepreneurship, makes a profit, but at the same time carries a social mission. Self-sufficiency, financial returns are extremely important for social entrepreneurship. Independence from grants and donations, an ability to compete with ordinary entrepreneurs, solving social problems of society – these are the main postulates of social entrepreneurship development (Dees, 2011; Shatska, 2021; Shevchuk, 2020).

Most commonly, social entrepreneurship is aimed at solving the problem of employment, creating jobs for socially unprotected groups of citizens experiencing difficulties in finding a job: for poorly qualified unemployed, disabled people, single mothers or persons with a long career break, who have lost their previous skills. Work integration social enterprises (WISEs), through their activities, pursue labour involvement and social acceptance for those who, for whatever reason, became unclaimed (Suykens et al., 2019; Strapchuk, 2021).

## **The Concept and Main Characteristics of Social Entrepreneurship**

J.G. Dees (1998) gave his personal definition of a social entrepreneur: “Social entrepreneurs play the role of change agents in the social sector, by adopting a mission to create and sustain social value, recognising and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission, engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning, acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand, and exhibiting heightened accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created.” J. Boschee (2003), one of the founders of the National Centre for Social Entrepreneurs, founder of the Institute of Social Entrepreneurs, gave the following definition

in 1984: “Social entrepreneurs are not-for-profit executives who pay increasing attention to market forces without losing sight of their underlying missions to somehow balance moral imperatives and the profit motives – and that balancing act is the heart and soul of the movement.”

Scientists at Harvard school R.L. Martin and S. Osberg (2007) published a manifesto article “Social Entrepreneurship: The Case for Definition” in the journal. They believe that “unlike social service providers, social entrepreneurs explicitly aim to permanently and systematically transform a miserable or unfair societal condition. Unlike social advocates, social entrepreneurs act directly, creating a product, service, or methodology that spurs the transformation of the status quo.”

American researchers J. Mair and I. Marty (2006), have identified one common feature characteristic of these enterprises – “a process involving the innovative use and combination of resources (which enterprises themselves do not own) in order to solve social problems and change social conditions”. According to M. Yang and P. Gabrielson (2018), the phenomenon of entrepreneurship is intertwined with a complex set of contiguous and overlapping constructs, such as change and innovation management, technological and environmental turbulence, new product development, small business management, individualism and industry development. Thus, entrepreneurs are innovators who founded new organisations, developed and implemented new programs and methods, were able to organise and expand new services, and redirect organisations” (Guo and Peng, 2020; Kuznetsova and Khomenko, 2020).

Five years later, in 1991, S. Waddock and J.E. Post (1991) claimed that there are three characteristics required for a successful social entrepreneur (Fig. 1).

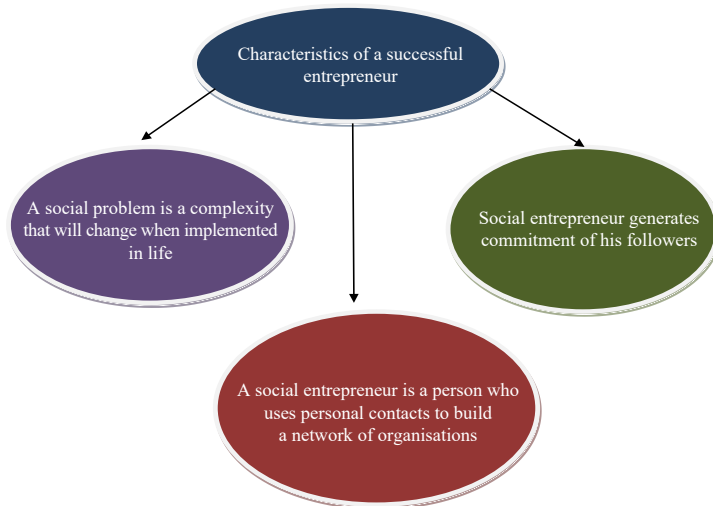


Figure 1. Characteristics of social entrepreneur

J.S. Liptrap (2020) broadly defines social enterprise as the use of non-governmental, market-based approaches to solving social problems. According to S.K. Alter (2003), back in 1996, the Roberts Entrepreneurship Development Fund (REDF) established a social enterprise for the Economic Development of the Homeless (USA) as “an income-producing enterprise founded to create economic opportunities for people with very low incomes, while working for financial profit”.

### **An Analysis of Foreign Countries Experiences in The Development of Social Entrepreneurship**

In 2016, the Thomson Reuters Foundation (2016), Deutsche Bank UnLtd and the Global Social Entrepreneurship Network conducted the world's first survey of experts on the countries best suited for social entrepreneurs. This survey will be conducted every three years; the first survey was conducted in 2016, and the second one – in 2019. According to the survey results, detailed statistical data on 12 indicators are specified. Countries are ranked independently for each of the 12 indicators. As a result, 880 experts were interviewed and 619 responses were received. This study declared the United States to be the best country for social entrepreneurs in 2016. However, in 2019, the United States dropped to 32<sup>nd</sup> place in this indicator. Thus, in 2019, the most successful countries in the development of social entrepreneurship include the following: Canada, Australia, France, Belgium, Singapore, Denmark, Netherlands, Finland, Indonesia, Chile.

One of the largest and most famous organisations that unite and support social enterprises in the United States is the Social Enterprise Alliance. The Alliance (SEA) defines itself as “An affiliated organisation that aims to create a social enterprise movement that mobilises non-profit and donor organisations to foster the development of profit-making strategies.” The alliance was formed in 2002 after the merge of two organisations: The National Gathering for Social Entrepreneurs (founded in 1998) and Sea Change (founded in 2000). The Alliance provides tools to improve the performance of social enterprises. For example, SEA can provide its members with a database of scientific articles, business plans, templates for creating and organising social enterprises. Also, web-site and page on the social network play an important role in the structure of information support for the members of the Association.

The unifying significance of SEA lies in expanding community members at the national level, acquaintance of representatives of one direction of social entrepreneurship from different States. For these purposes, SEA offices are established throughout the United States. The main types of interaction with social entrepreneurs are carried out through:

- monthly webinars;
- educational courses and seminars;
- the annual Summit of Social Entrepreneurs.

One of the important projects of SEA is organisation and holding of the Summit on Social Entrepreneurship. The activities of the Ashoka Foundation (2020) in the USA are also valuable. The main distinguishing feature of the Ashoka Foundation is mainly material

support for social entrepreneurs. The main sources of funding are donations from private individuals and commercial organisations. The fund does not receive financial support from the state (Ashoka, 2020). According to experts, the main problem of research activities and training of qualified personnel in the field of social entrepreneurship in the United States is the absence of a legislative organisational-legal, and definitional system of social entrepreneurship at the federal level (Pavlov, 2018; Polukarov et al., 2021; Bespalko, 2019).

There are 70.000 socially oriented companies in the UK nowadays, according to the Cabinet Office. These companies employ about 1 million people. Social entrepreneurship has been rapidly developing in the UK in recent years. Its contribution to GDP is about 24 billion pounds. And this number is growing all the time (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2016).

The comprehensive support is essential for the successful development of social entrepreneurship around the world. For example, in the United States, which in 2016, according to the Thompson Reuters Foundation, were 1st in the ranking of countries convenient for the development of social entrepreneurship, there is both state and non-state support for social entrepreneurship. State support includes, first of all, the provision of information support, the creation of infrastructure for the development of social entrepreneurship and assistance in the development of successful social projects. It is believed that the most difficult stage in the development of social entrepreneurs is the first 2-4 years, the starting period during which approximately a third of social entrepreneurs disappear, and more than 50% cease to exist. In the USA, there is a system of state grant funding for the best social initiatives, information support, etc.

### **Features of Social Entrepreneurship Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan**

The analysis of the experience of foreign countries in the development of social entrepreneurship has shown a number of common problems, faced by acting social entrepreneurs around the world, and the general features of the development of social entrepreneurship. Firstly, this is the lack of a clear definition of social entrepreneurship, enshrined at the legislative level in many countries. Secondly, many social entrepreneurs face funding challenges. The main ways in which social entrepreneurship is funded are grants, fundraising, and earning their own profits. Thirdly, in many countries there are certain funds to support social entrepreneurship (Social Enterprise Alliance, Ashoka Foundation), which are financed through infusions from the private sector. The activity of these funds is to support social entrepreneurship, including material support.

Fourthly, in developed countries there is a connection between social entrepreneurship and the academic environment, which plays an important role in popularising the development of social entrepreneurship through online forums, conferences, where topical issues and problems of social entrepreneurs are highlighted. In addition, scientists in these countries are deeply involved in researching the scientific aspects of this field of activity. Fifthly, developed state support for social entrepreneurship is provided.

The above-mentioned features of the development of social entrepreneurship in developed countries must be taken into account by state and non-state structures involved

in supporting social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan. In the Republic of Kazakhstan, the need to develop social entrepreneurship was due to a number of reasons, the main of which are the following:

- the need for a transition to an innovative, socially oriented development model (not only in technological, but also in the social modernisation of the country);
- a sharp increase in the number of people in need of social assistance;
- the massive emergence of new categories of people in need of support – low-income families, social orphans, victims of domestic violence, etc.;
- greening of the business environment, business values and communications;
- socialisation of processes in management and network interactions.

In July 2020, the Zor-Rukh Public Foundation, commissioned by the Ministry of Information and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, conducted a comprehensive study “Social Entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan”. As part of a comprehensive study, 2 types of studies and surveys were carried out. The first type is in-depth interviews with 62 respondents in different geographic regions of Kazakhstan. The second type is a questionnaire survey of 297 representatives of social entrepreneurship and an analysis of their answers to 29 specific designated questions. During the analysis, all the answers were taken into account, the averaged numbers and indicators were derived, and the percentages were calculated for each question.

The study paid attention to the important points in the development of social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan. The key issue of the study was to identify the main areas of activity of social entrepreneurs. Thus, the analysis (Ministry of Information..., 2020) showed that about 39% of the respondents are engaged in the provision of services, about 14% of the respondents are engaged in the production of goods and accessories (Fig. 2).

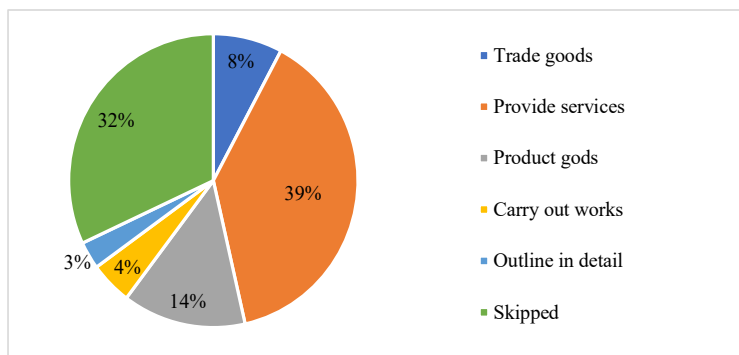


Figure 2. Areas of activity of social entrepreneurs in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2020

Figure 2 shows that in the republic nowadays there is an insufficient number of social entrepreneurs who could produce goods using the brand “Made in Kazakhstan” and could participate in state tenders.

Production is the key to the development of social entrepreneurship, since, with the right trend, it leads to an increase in the income and profits of entrepreneurs, with the help of which social issues will be solved and social projects will be implemented. But the problem of the low number of social entrepreneurs employed in production is explained by the lack of the necessary production capacities. Thus, in authors' opinion, the collaboration of social entrepreneurs and large and medium-sized businesses in Kazakhstan can satisfy both interested parties.

The next important point in the analysis of the development of social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan is the study of the number of employees involved in the activities of enterprises that consider themselves to be social. The study showed that 63% of respondents work in a team of 1-5 people (Fig. 3).

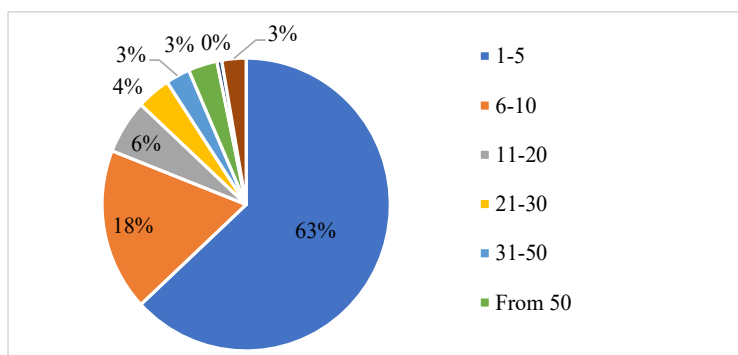


Figure 3. Number of employees of social enterprises in Kazakhstan in 2020

As Figure 3 shows, 18% of respondents work in a company with an average of 6 to 10 employees. The number of companies employing up to 20 people is only 6% of the 297 surveyed social entrepreneurs. This diagram confirms the fact that social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan is absolutely undeveloped, and public funds and organisations are the main employers in this area. Having grants and programs, non-profitable organisations hire specialists to solve any social issues within the framework of only project work – these teams are not a self-organising commercial structure focused on constant growth and reinvestment. The survey showed that the current social entrepreneurs correctly understood the main mission of their future activities (Fig. 4).

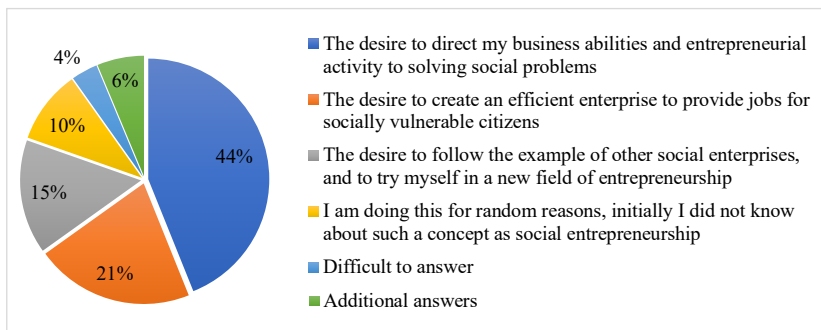


Figure 4. The purpose of engaging in social entrepreneurship

As Figure 4 shows, despite the fact that there is still no clear understanding of the correct motivation for social entrepreneurship, for 44% of the respondents, the main motive for engaging in social entrepreneurship was the desire to direct their business abilities and entrepreneurial activity to solving social problems. While 21% of the respondents strive to create an effective enterprise to provide jobs for socially unprotected citizens. The answer of 15.3% of respondents as “the desire to follow the example of other social entrepreneurs and the desire to try themselves in a new field of entrepreneurship” indicates that the concept of social entrepreneurship is becoming popular in the republic. At the same time, about 10% of respondents are engaged in social entrepreneurship for random reasons.

As regards the types of business models in social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan, a large share (42%) is occupied by the “B2C” (Business-To-Consumer) model, that is, a model that presupposes a consumer-oriented business operation (Fig. 5).

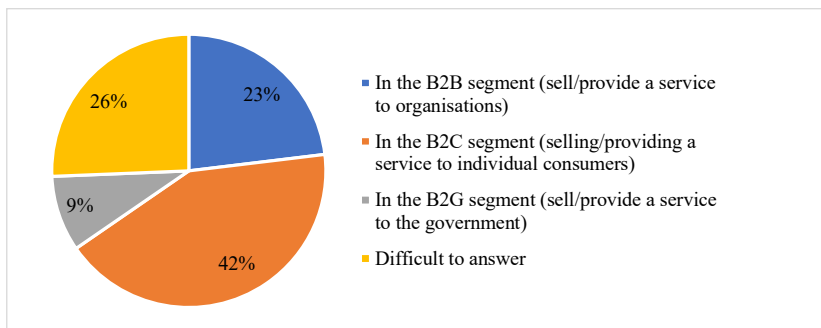


Figure 5. Segmentation of social entrepreneurs by type of business models in Kazakhstan in 2020

According to Figure 5, 26% of respondents found it difficult to answer this question, owing to the lack of public awareness of the working principles in business. At the same time, 23% of responding social entrepreneurs, work according to the “B2B” (Business to



Business) principle, that is, they work not for the final, ordinary consumer, but for the same companies, for another business.

The study of the development of social entrepreneurship has shown that in foreign countries, support for entrepreneurs at the initial stage plays an important role in the development of this type of business. As mentioned above, the first 2-4 years are the most difficult for social business development. It is during this period that support is required – financial, informational, training, etc. In the Republic of Kazakhstan, such support is provided by the Social Projects Development Fund “Samruk-Kazyna Trust”, Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation Development “Almaty Management University” and the British Council, the International Fund “Reach the Change”. Today in Kazakhstan there are no public and private programs to support social entrepreneurship, and there is insufficient activity in terms of awareness of the target audience. This year, on the initiative of the Chairman of the Senate of Parliament M. Ashimbayev, a working group on the draft law on social entrepreneurship was created. For the time being, a draft law is being developed, which can become the foundation for all representatives of the new trend.

One of the examples of the effective development of social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan is the entrepreneur Miras Abbasov and his company “BioPack.kz”. The company’s activities are aimed at meeting two social purposes at once: solving the environmental problem of using plastic bags and employing socially vulnerable segments of population. The “BioPack.kz” works on the B2B principle in cooperation with large hypermarkets of the country: “Kenmart”, “Galmart”, “Ramstore”, “A2”, “Vkusmart” and “Anvar”. Entrepreneurs from Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kyrgyzstan also establish demand for ecological products manufactured by “BioPack.kz”. There are no analogues of these products in the CIS area. In Kazakhstan, the consumers of bio-packages are small and medium-sized businesses, mainly from the field of organic food, fast food, organic cosmetics, pharmacy chains, manufacturers of dried fruits, semi-processed products and other products requiring packaging. Thus, the solution of one of the environmental problems in Kazakhstan is possible through the work of the social enterprise “BioPack.kz” (Dubovitskikh 2015).

As noted above, social entrepreneurship is a business aimed at meeting social needs of society, but operating on the principles of self-sufficiency and introduction of an innovative business idea. These enterprises in Kazakhstan include the company “GreenTAL”, founded in 2015 by Emin Askerov. The main mission of the company is training and further employment of people from socially vulnerable groups of population, which include people with disabilities, former prisoners, single mothers, mothers raising children with disabilities. Nowadays, the company “GreenTAL” has 62 employees from this category. The company develops in 6 areas: carpentry (production of furniture and wood products), sewing workshop (production of clothing and textile products), decoration (drawing, decoration, ornamentation and finishing of various surfaces), felt production (production of interior objects and souvenir products), printing (production of printed and souvenir products) and catering (social cafe).

## Conclusions

1. The development of social entrepreneurship is extremely important for Kazakhstan at the present time. However, the conducted research revealed the presence of certain reasons and difficulties that have a restraining influence on its development. The lack of a legal framework, regulating the activities of social entrepreneurs, does not allow many of them to count on state assistance in their establishment and further development. There are problems in attracting funds, especially at the first stage of entrepreneurship development.
2. The creation of necessary infrastructure that will contribute to the organisation of the activities of social entrepreneurs is one of the solutions proposed by the authors. In this regard, on the basis of this study, the authors propose the following measures to stimulate the development of social entrepreneurship in the Republic of Kazakhstan: creation of a database of social entrepreneurs with an indication of the areas of activity and confirmation of social impact; development of a legal form for social entrepreneurs; consolidation of the legal term and definition of criteria and principles of social entrepreneurship; popularisation of the mentoring system and organisation of Schools of Social Entrepreneurship; engagement of state and quasi-state organisations in supporting burgeoning social entrepreneurs on preferential lease of premises, providing demand for the products of social entrepreneurs, employment issues, training and employment of people from the social category, development of specialised financing instruments.

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