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# Social Entrepreneurship as a Tool for Personal and Community Development

## Sociālā uzņēmējdarbība kā instruments personīgai un kopienas attīstībai

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The article “Social Entrepreneurship as a Tool for Personal and Community Development” by Valters Dolacis (Latvian Christian Academy, Latvia) deals with the phenomenon and practice of social entrepreneurship as a tool for both the community development and that on a personal level for both the practitioner and the people involved in enterprise activities. Social entrepreneurship serves as one of social technologies for social cohesion of disadvantaged and marginalized groups of society, and therefore can be used as a practical method in the field of social work. Social entrepreneurship provides an operational platform for renewal of people’s skills of self-dependence by learning doing things together, which is a relevant motivational aspect for socially marginal people for solving their social and personal problems. Thus the social cohesion of disadvantaged and marginalized groups of society, by being involved in social entrepreneurial activities and thus being placed in the sphere of productive economy on the scale of community, contributes to local community development, turning citizens to the status of active protagonists of their destiny and local community – into socially active one. However, the renewal of a person’s social functioning, achieved by involvement in social entrepreneurial activities, covers person’s life holistically – starting from person’s inner processes that leads to forming the external social relationships. The analysis of this process therefore in the article involves an anthropological perspective on activating people’s inner resources and human potential in the activities of social enterprises, which shows the dimension of social entrepreneurship as a tool for personal development as well.

**Key words:** social entrepreneurship, social work, social cohesion, social and spiritual functioning, human potential, inner resources of a person, reciprocity.

## Introduction

Topicality of the paper is revealed in the fact that social entrepreneurship (SE) organizations or social enterprises have a potential of playing an essential role in the improvement of social cohesion of society, especially in situation of economic breakdown, which usually results in the lack of accustomed resources of financial aids to the people and thus facilitates the development of marginalization of society on economic scale. As the operational sphere of social work is directly connected with providing assistance for the people in need, there appears necessity for finding innovative forms of providing assistance in such a situation. Article deals with the principles and practice of SE as possibility to develop innovative social technologies for social cohesion of society – both on community and personal level. Therefore, the goal of the article is to explore the phenomenon and practice of social entrepreneurship in the context of social work where SE as an innovative approach can be used as a tool for community development and transformation on a personal level for practitioners and people involved in enterprise activities.

## The concept and practice of social entrepreneurship in the context of social economy

SE functions in the context of social economy, which has been recognized on the level of the European Parliament as the *cornerstone of the European social model* (Report on a European Social Model for future, 2006). Social economy plays an essential role in the European economy by 1) combining profitability with solidarity, 2) creating high-quality jobs, 3) strengthening social, economic and regional cohesion, 4) generating social capital, 5) promoting active citizenship, solidarity and a type of economy with democratic values, which puts people first, 6) in addition to supporting sustainable development and social, environmental and technological innovation (The Social Economy in the European Union: Summary of the Report, 2007, 5-6). Thus SE has developed from particular organizational and legal business formations – *cooperatives, mutual societies, associations, social enterprises, foundations* a.o. entities – in each European country.

These types of organizations are known for their capacity to respond to emerging needs and new social demands, particularly in periods of crisis marked by socioeconomic transformations, especially in the areas where the market of the public sectors seem to fail (Bouchard, 2010a, 11). Social enterprises in that way offer support services to economic development: local development, community development, solidary financing, creation and maintenance of jobs, job insertions, etc. (Bouchard, 2010b, 117). They are created to meet their members' needs through applying the principle of self-help; they are companies in which members and users of the activity in question are usually the same. Coming to *definition of social enterprises*, prominent SE researchers Defourny & Nyssens (2010, 43) provide the following: “Social enterprises are not-for-profit private organizations providing goods or services directly related to their explicit aim to benefit the community. They generally rely on a collective dynamics involving various types of stakeholders in their governing bodies, they place a high value on their autonomy and they bear economic risks related to their activity”.

There exist three main social functions characteristic to SE organizations: 1) solidary function – where economy evolves from being a tool of solidarity to being the aim of the organization in order to provide assistance in solving life-relevant issues of the people;

2) *democratic function* – where participation potentialities allow organizations to be ‘schools of democracy’ by which its members are able to develop political skills and civic, communitarian virtues; and 3) *productive function* – that differs from that of governmental and for-profit organizations (price of products is inferior to the market price or a lack of competition on the market, although being relevant market players) (Enjolras, 2010, 48-52).

Looking to the definition and functions of social enterprises, it is possible to highlight some main principles of SE in modern expressions by social enterprises: – the most important being 1) the primacy of the individual and the social objective over capital; 2) the defense and application of the principle of *solidarity, responsibility, reciprocity (social capital) and empowerment*; and 3) most of the surpluses are used in pursuit of sustainable development objectives, services of interest to members or the general interest (*see The Charter of Principles of the Social Economy, 2000*).

Canadian researchers Peter and Tina Dacin together with Margaret Matear (Dacin *et al.*, 2010, 37-57) have analysed more than 130 sources of different definitions of social entrepreneurship, and have come to conclusion that there are several focuses that determine the definition of SE, e.g., if social enterprise is analysed in economic or management context, its interpretation differs from approach of social work science where social enterprise is defined as the form of social work.

## **Social entrepreneurship as the form of social work**

SE values are highly consistent with the common EU objectives of social inclusion and whereas decent employment, training and re-inclusion should be linked. This links SE with the operative sphere of social policy at national level. The SE initiatives have demonstrated that they can greatly improve the social status of disadvantaged people (as in case, for example, of microcredit or savings-and-loans cooperatives facilitating financial inclusion, increasing women’s influence) and that they have a substantial capacity for social innovation, encouraging those facing difficulty to find solutions to their own social problems, as regards reconciling their professional and private life, gender equality, the quality of their family life, and their ability to care for children, elderly people and people with disabilities (The Social Economy in the European Union: Summary of the Report, 2007, 5).

Having national perspective in mind, attribution of the named principles of SE has a potential of providing for the practice of social work, for example, in Latvia its European dimension and innovative practice. Of great importance in situation of lacking the resources become different forms of informal and non-monetary assistance, especially strengthening the social capital of people’s associations helping to consolidate the personal skills of independence. Here SE serves as one of social technologies for social cohesion of disadvantaged and marginalized groups of society, and therefore can be used as a practical method in the field of social work.

Social entrepreneurship provides an operational platform for renewal of people’s skills of self-dependence by learning doing things together, which is a relevant motivational aspect for socially marginal people for solving their social and personal problems. Thus the social cohesion of disadvantaged and marginalized groups of society, by being involved in social entrepreneurial activities and thus being placed in the sphere of productive economy on the scale of community, contributes to local community development, turning citizens to the status of active protagonists of their destiny and local community – into socially active one.

## The concept of Caritative social work and social entrepreneurship

Being the approach based on European social model, Latvian Christian Academy has developed a profession of Caritative social work<sup>1</sup> operating with the differing social work and other methodology, i.e., realizing innovative caritative technologies with a goal to stabilize the cohesion of society and the social and spiritual functioning of social objects (*see* Gūtmane, 2009). Profession has been legalized also in Classification of Occupations (2003; 2009) of Latvia, attributing rights of professional activities to caritative social workers within the system of social welfare in Latvia.

Caritative social worker professionally includes his or her own activity in EU set system of social protection that works against exclusion of a person, and it sees SE as an integral form of profession's functional capacities, as SE here is seen as EU promoted concept not driven by the profit motive but by social benefit to those being involved in this activity (*see* Social Business Initiative, 2011), in that way multiplying the forms of social capital for overcoming so called 'social depression' at urban and rural level (*see* Report on Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation in combating unemployment, 2014). Here the tasks of Caritative social work and SE are complementary to each other.

However, the renewal of a person's social functioning, achieved by involvement in social entrepreneurial activities, covers person's life holistically – starting from person's inner processes that leads to forming the external social relationships. The analysis of this process therefore in the article involves an anthropological perspective on activating people's inner resources and human potential in the activities of social enterprises, which shows the dimension of social entrepreneurship as a tool for personal development as well.

### Anthropological framework

As stated before, the objectives of social entrepreneurship are social objectives, not primarily for profit making. The term *social* here includes the meaning and practice of relationships, consequently the community of people, within which the separate, individual person gains a competence for solving of problems of one's own life. Consequently, social entrepreneurship is directed towards the stabilization of human life by bringing him or her in community with other people for solving common problems. In that way, SE acquires anthropological-oriented character, in which of importance becomes not only the aspects of making relationships for obtaining and consolidating the competence, but also the inner stabilizing factors of a person that allows a person to stay and endure in these relationships.

The objective in social work is to help persons, families, groups of persons and society in general to facilitate or to renew their ability to function *socially*, as well as to create favourable environment for this functioning, as it is stated in the Law of Social services and social assistance of Republic of Latvia (*see* Sociālo pakalpojumu un sociālās palīdzības likums, § 1.19). The definition of Caritative social work deepens this definition of social work, because Caritative social work, being analogue to that of social work in Latvia, includes the renewal of abilities of individuals, families and groups not only to function socially but as well to function *spiritually*, as stated in the Law (*Ibid.*, § 1.32). Such a setting is essential because without recovery of spiritual functioning it is not possible to ensure stable renewal of social functioning.

Thus, the approach of Caritative social work and social entrepreneurship deepens operational definition of social work, as social functioning in its essence covers person's life holistically, in its entirety – person's inner processes and forming external social relationships. Therefore social entrepreneurship becomes a form of social work, as it solves the renewal of social functioning of a person. It is done by organizing individuals for such entrepreneurial activities, which are directed towards achieving social objectives with what social entrepreneurship differs from classic entrepreneurship. Here dominates the objectives of stabilizing a person's life, and these objectives are reached with the means of *reciprocity* or mutuality.

Nowadays it is possible to notice in the helping professions the crisis of profession, when person is disappearing from the centre of the helping profession, namely, in institutional systems of assistance client is no more in the centre. Place of the centre is taken by the institutional system itself, by its resources and methods as a goal in itself. The reason of it is the bureaucratising of the system of assistance, in which of importance becomes the registering of effectivity of assistance provided – as a demand from leadership regarding casework of social workers with clients. Because of the limited time, which is being devoted for caseworking an individual case, this demanded of effectivity is not fully reached. Secondly, crisis of profession in social work is deepened by phenomena when a person is turned into a blunt receiver of assistance (consumer) who is no more willing to realize his or her human potential. System is not putting in action mechanisms that would help a person to unlock one's own inner potential for overcoming spiritual and social isolation, as it asks for working with the processes of a "client's" inner world. However, for that social workers are not trained. In Caritative social work, this sphere of work, in its turn, is brought forward as the primary one.

Social entrepreneurship as the form of social work is exactly one of the ways to return a "social client" in the position of socially active life, by providing him or her the lacking, forgotten or undeveloped skills of self-determination in solving problems.

Renewing a human identity in this context means returning a human potential. In its turn, at the foundation of human identity, using theological terminology, there lies *God's image and likeness (Imago Dei)* that is placed in every person. *Image of God* is that given constant predisposition in a human being that determines his or her likeness to the very Person of Triune God, and marks out a human being from all other God's created beings on this earth as inseparable unity of spirit, soul and body. As defined by Holy hierarch Theophan the Recluse, from *the image of God* there stems out human qualities that define a person: 1) the fact a person is endowed with a *reason*, intellect, his or her "ego" consciousness, ability to distinct oneself from other beings, from what results 2) human *independence*, sovereign or self-reliant capacity to act in the limits of reasonable freedom that, in its turn, is connected to ability for *taking responsibility*, and 3) *vitality*, as a human being in the moment of his or her origins is not yet the one whose potential he or she can become, so a person develops, forms oneself, becomes (Feofan Zatvornik, 2008, 198-199). These are thoughts, feelings and wishes of a person itself, which are turned inwardly, embedded in the spiritual nature of a person and transformed into nutrition or elements of growth for the entire person. The most essential quality of human life and personality is *immortality* that includes limitless potential of possibilities of perfection of a human being.

Towards this renewal and increase of potential of becoming a human person there should be directed the professional activity of all helping professions, including that of social entrepreneurship as well. Potential of human-becoming in a person, in its turn, is

defined by *likeness of God*, which is the changing value (as opposed to the *image of God*) and should be developed as the growth of humanity in a human, in other words, as possibility for a personal growth. This process takes place gradually as the renewal of God-likeness or *humanity* in a person is the process that takes time, and every step in this process is built on the achievement of the previous one, – steps being the levels of spiritual maturation of a person. As St. Isaac the Syrian has said: “To the measure of one’s living is the perception of truth<sup>2</sup>” (Zhuravskiy, 1995, 12-13), namely, to the measure of inner purification there unfolds possibility of accepting the reality; in other words, to what extent a person has developed spiritually, to that extent he or she is capable of perceiving the truth, the reality around. Practically it means, we cannot ask of a person (or demand changes from a client) what he or she is not ready for inwardly.

There are several ways that the *likeness of God* can be renewed in a person: through *conscience*, through *reciprocity* or *community with others*, and *work*.

*Conscience* is the core of virtues in a person whose centre is the *image of God*, ever-present reminder about the protonorms of the divine order interweaved in this world. Holy hierarch Theophan the Recluse has spoken of conscience as the power of spirit in a person, which, recognizing the law and freedom, defines their mutual relationships in a person, and finally when conscience merge with the will of a person, there cease to exist inner revolt: a person enters in a condition where he or she is filled with the law of love (Feofan Zatvornik, 2008, 366-384), or in other words, one has restored the wholeness or integrity of his or her person.

*Reciprocity*. Especially important this principle is for Caritative social worker as human being is a being of relations, and he or she is driven by faith-motivated assistance to the ‘neighbour’ – the people around. For him or her there exist two ethical maxims that constitutes “investing” of himself in the fellow neighbour, the social dimension of his or her activity: a) biblical message of Christ that one should act for the sake of “the least of My brothers” (Matthew 25: 35-36, 40), namely, for the sake of socially “the least one”, the socially excluded one, the poor, the person who is unprovided for by society; and other maxima b) *If you do not love your brother, who is in front of you, how can you love God, Whom you do not see?* (paraphrased from 1st Epistle of John 4:20), thus showing that personal relationships with God include at the same time rich inter-subjective aspects in community of people (*see* Horuzhy, 2006: Crisis of Classical European Ethics in the Prism of Anthropology); here reciprocity as responsibility for the other. Taken together, these ethical maxims constitutes the basis for reciprocity in relations.

*Work as a mission*. Engaging oneself in work for the good of community, person directs his or her personal energies towards goal, with this breaking the mechanisms of barriers between people, going out of one’s own inner isolation so that a person may start forming trustworthy and safe social relationships, and in that way to renew his or her social functioning.

Philosopher and anthropologist Tzvetan Todorov says, “human nature is to be seen as flexible for radical transformations, if it awakens in person God’s created latent abilities and the necessity for action” (*see* Todorov, 2001). But how social entrepreneurship can bring into motion a person socially – his or her mind, heart, will making a person more active?

*First of all*, by respecting a human dignity, respecting the needs of people, seeing them and advocating them in the common activity of social enterprise, thus putting the social objectives above profit making. When one person devotes him or herself to the other person in need, then in the fact of devotion itself there is already included and working a hope – specifically for the other, which allows a person to believe in self. *Secondly*, a person gets to know him or herself when being engaged in common activity with others of trying to solve problems – in communication with others seeing his or her enemies of inner nature: ability/disability to taking care of others (or taking responsibility), freedom from fears, aggression, anger, superstitions or captivity from them all – thus testing the level of inner freedom; as well the practice of taking responsibility and readiness for necessary changes in one’s own personality, or refusal to work with oneself, which leaves a negative impact to all common activity. Here of importance becomes the principle of *empowerment* – entrusting the others with necessary skills for reaching their own set goals and setting them free from the assistance from outside. *Thirdly*, stimulating the creativity of a person, developing new or undeveloped skills. Through the process of creativity person gains belief in a personal self, observing the unnoticed or forgotten talents and developing them for the common good of enterprise. Creativity here functions as the general approach in social entrepreneurship to finding the innovative solutions for solving the individual and social problems. This aspect of creativity, functioning as the general approach in social entrepreneurship, is of special relevance because only creativity allows finding the innovative solutions for solving life-relevant issues of the people in social enterprises in the ways that are not making a person more dependent or addicted to the assistance provided, but ensures the freedom of personality or, in other words, renews person’s spiritual and social functioning.

However, in this situation there exist *two risks*. First of all, how to awaken one’s awareness to willingly “invest” oneself in the other person, to open eyes to the real needs of the other and have willingness to help? Here again we come to the principle of *reciprocity* – as the situation of poverty of the other is able to awaken reciprocity, compassion for the other. When a person sees real people, real situation of them, then reciprocity, compassion is awakened, and it is awakened by practical activity. Human attitude towards people who are in appalling sufferings or needs like litmus shows a person’s readiness or immaturity to be ready to do something about it. So it is a person’s existential reaction to the challenge of sufferings in the lives of others, from which there can be born a reciprocity, compassion for the others, a motivation (*see* Kiessling, 1998) – so needed for organizing oneself for solving life-relevant issues of the people in social enterprises.

When reciprocity between people is born, it opens doors for expressing love to the other in practical activity or concern. It allows to accept the other, and thus reciprocity is exactly what is needed for overcoming inner isolation of a person, gaining of belief that there exist trustworthy relationships with others. Where love is expressed as practical solidarity and concern among people, there economy becomes a tool of solidarity as the aim of social enterprise is to provide assistance in solving life-relevant issues of the people – individually and commonly. From this the charity is born, which helps as motivation.

Reciprocity born allows supporting the other when he or she experiences a fall or failure, catching up the other when he or she falls down – as from the success of an individual person in the social enterprise depends the success of all the enterprise (the contribution of everyone in the enterprise is essential as in the process of communication there are revealed the talents of everyone involved).

Second risk is that the very intervenor – social worker or social entrepreneur – is in crisis himself and cannot reach the other person, client. One of the reasons may be that the intervenor’s awareness of his or her personality is self-sufficient. However, the very intervenor or worker is a person with the same challenges for his personality as is his client or fellow human being. If a worker is not spiritually functioning then he or she cannot spiritually address to other person. This risk stays for all professionals of the helping professions, and Caritative social worker as well as every specialist working with people is subjected to this risk as well. Consequently, here appears the so called *binding reciprocity* – a practitioner cannot ask from the other person changes in personality if he or she is not undergoing the inner changes of similar nature in his or her personality as well. Otto Scharmer, the leadership theoretician, illustrates this axiom by quoting William O’Brien, late CEO of *Hanover Insurance*, when asked summing up his most important learning experience in leading profound change, namely, “the success of intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervenor” (see Scharmer, 2010).

What a specialist should do? When a specialist works with people or clients, he or she should have the necessary knowledge in anthropology, human understanding in wholeness, taking into consideration the fact that the object of social action is not the impersonal social problem but his or her own personality with its life story, situation of life, and with the same necessity to grow, to find stability in his or her self-esteem and humanity. To specialist similarly applies the stimulation of aspects of God-likeness of his or her own personality. Secondly, one needs to have competence of caritative communication, namely, to see the other person as partner for cooperation that asks for implementation of reciprocity, in which specialist is not an instructor but a fellow companion – who him or herself in the given situation is growing and improving. Thirdly, in order this process may happen, the very specialist should start with his or her own spiritual life, centre of which is belonging to the Church and its sacraments, what is the main precondition for sustainable professional activity. As the Holy hierarch Theophan the Recluse indicates, without noble ideals in Christianity in order to help a person there is a need also for strength and expertise (‘know-how’) to act – there is a need for active, working wisdom (Teofans Vientuļnieks, 2009, 9). Therefore, the basic task is the true life in the spirit of Christ – uniting with Christ’s divine life in the Church. Christian life is the way how the active, working communication with God is being sustained in the Person of Jesus Christ – by fulfilling with the help of God’s grace in one’s life the holy will of God (Ibid., 11).

Theophan the Recluse overall defines Christian faith as divine communication and active, working communication. For that there is a need for struggle with oneself – a willingness and activity to persecute the sin in one’s life and decisively strive for purity and cleanness, because in a person’s heart all the time there accumulates unchastity and immorality that leads off the love towards people (Ibid., 15); such a person is no more a giver and realizer of reciprocity.

Therefore, in a specialist, in which there has started his or her own spiritual life, there appears awareness that all answers are not to be found in him or herself alone, that he or she is not self-sufficient. Nowadays in the helping human professions there is a growing discussion about the increasing necessity toward knowing oneself, toward the skills of self-reflection that would allow to become clear about one’s motivation, to cleanse the motivation – what is the goal of my work? It is possible to help others if a

specialist forms in oneself a caritative attitude – full of respect and compassion toward the other person. Cooperation, communication, and the common quest for truth is possible if a specialist manages the culture of taking responsibility – confession of sins, universal communication – prayer, and is capable for *substitutional place-taking* for the sake of his or her clients. Substitutional place-taking<sup>3</sup> here is the practice of supporting the other in the way that he or she is encouraged to recover lost spiritual and moral abilities, faith in a personal self that is needed for a decent self-esteem and for activity organized together.

Such a practitioner who sees the other person in his or her wholeness and attributes to him or herself the same qualities, which he asks from others, in the field of social work and in community of social entrepreneurship serves as an element of bringing renewal to the whole body of community.

Stimulating anyone of the earlier mentioned aspects of *God-likeness* by professional or entrepreneurial activity together with reciprocal responsibility of a practitioner for the same spiritual goals as for the other person he or she is addressing, it is possible to stimulate spiritual stability, inner growth and human potential of the other person – person's possibility to become more human. In that way social entrepreneurship with its mechanisms and application of its constituting principles in practice helps developing a human potential, and can be seen in the context as instrumental tool, method of social work – as the goal of Caritative social work and social entrepreneurship is the stabilization of a person's life by activating spiritual and social functioning of a person.

## **Conclusions**

Raising citizens to the status of active protagonists of their own destiny, gives possibility for people in the areas dominated by the so called 'social depression' to overcome it by organizing themselves in groups of social initiatives. In Latvia as an example for it serves the movement of *Local Initiative Groups (VRG)* and community foundations as promoters and initiators of (productive) community initiatives. Having accumulated enough social capital, this initiative may accept and develop into stable form of social entrepreneurship, which, being the European Commission's promoted concept of 'a different approach to entrepreneurship', brings original initiative as part of non-market sub-sector of social economy in the market or business sub-sector of social economy, as well as being one of the social technologies of Caritative social work for social cohesion of disadvantaged and marginalized groups of society. Article has also showed the anthropological principles of people's motivation and engaging in social enterprises and principles of activating person's inner resources and human potential.

Social enterprises have had and have a fundamental role in the improvement of social cohesion, especially in local communities. Sometimes they represent possibility of economic survival in a region as is the case of agricultural cooperatives; in other situations, they are the only viable way to solve a social problem. However, SE in Latvia is still a diffused, newly-emerged concept. The existing studies comprise only some particular parts of it making difficult to identify it as a whole. The particular interest of the author is grouped around links between SE and social work on operational platform. We need to take into consideration that local initiatives of SE are the ones which are dealing with the newly emerging social needs of society, providing assistance to disadvantaged and marginalized groups of society.

Concluding, the SE initiatives at a local level can be characterized as players in the field of social cohesion of society, being (1) placed in the sphere of productive economy on the scale of a community (2) by the very marginal people involved in initiatives, (3) administered as small businesses, (4) controlled by the people involved and (5) supported by social services and social workers. The last aspects ask for more research in detail in order to develop the more thorough vision of attributing the principles to the sphere of social work in Latvia. Therefore of special importance grows the need for exploring the role of Social, Caritative social and Community workers, and other representatives of the helping professions at national level in assisting marginal people to come out of stagnation or isolation and to become active/productive in solving their social, economic, and personal problems.

Measuring the achieved result of common activity & people's associations in terms of social capital, non-monetary income or service and social added value becomes of importance as well as: 1) exploring ways for activating person's inner resources and human potential in the activities of social entrepreneurship, and 2) finding ways how the existing legislation can be revised and obstacles removed allowing the people to help themselves in the organized communitarian ways of overcoming social problems, becoming *empowered* in communities in the forms of productive social enterprises.

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2. In original Church-Slavonic: "*V meru zhitiya bivayet vospriyatiye istini*".
3. See the elaboration of principle of *place-taking* in the article of K. Kießling "Deacony – presence on the spirit of God's solidarity" (see Kießling, 2016).

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## **Sociālā uzņēmējdarbība kā instruments personiskai un kopienas attīstībai**

### *Kopsavilkums*

Raksts aplūko sociālo uzņēmējdarbību kā instrumentu personīgai un kopienas attīstībai gan praktiķim, gan cilvēkiem, kas ir iesaistīti uzņēmējdarbības aktivitātēs. Sociālā uzņēmējdarbība kalpo ka 'vien ano tehnoloģijām Social entrepreneurship serves as one of social technologies for social cohesion of disadvantaged and marginalized groups of society, and therefore can be used as a practical method in the field of social work. Social entrepreneurship provides an operational platform for renewal of people's skills of self-dependence by learning doing things together, which is a relevant motivational aspect for socially marginal people for solving their social and personal problems. Thus the social cohesion of disadvantaged and marginalized groups of society, by being involved in social entrepreneurial activities and thus being placed in the sphere of productive economy on the scale of community, contributes to local community development, turning citizens to the status of active protagonists of their destiny and local community – into socially active one. However, the renewal of a person's social functioning, achieved by involvement in social entrepreneurial activities, covers person's life holistically – starting from person's inner processes that leads to forming the external social relationships. The analysis of this process therefore in the article involves an anthropological perspective on activating people's inner resources and human potential in the activities of social enterprises, which shows the dimension of social entrepreneurship as a tool for personal development as well.

**Atslēgas vārdi:** social entrepreneurship, social work, social cohesion, social and spiritual functioning, human potential, inner resources of a person, reciprocity.



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