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DOI <https://doi.org/10.36059/978-966-397-353-1-12>

Dywnych H. A.,

*Candidate of Science in Public Administration, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Philology
Chernihiv Polytechnic National University*

THE POTENTIAL OF UNIVERSITIES FOR VETERANS' SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Summary. This work highlights the issue of strengthening the role of universities in the process of developing social entrepreneurship of former military personnel as a tool for their social adaptation. The researches conducted throughout the world and a Ukrainian survey have been studied.

Key words: social entrepreneurship, university, ex-servicemen, social adaptation.

Дивнич Г. Потенціал університетів для розвитку соціального підприємництва ветеранів

Анотація. У даній роботі висвітлено питання посилення ролі університетів у процесі розвитку соціального підприємництва колишніх військовослужбовців як інструменту їх соціальної адаптації. Розглянуто дослідження, проведені у різних країнах світу і попередні результати опитування, яке проводиться в університеті Чернігова.

Ключові слова: соціальне підприємництво, університет, колишні військовослужбовці, соціальна адаптація.

Nowadays Ukraine is undergoing a difficult period of its development under the conditions of war. The question of reintegration of ex-combatants that emerged after the beginning of ATO in 2014, is gaining more and more

attention with increasing number of people being mobilized and participating in the military actions, later becoming the veterans. As researchers state, reintegration is the process of a person's return/entry into a social system by restoring/forming social connections, attachments and relationships, acquiring social experience, social competence. In this process, social and personal dysfunctions may be the reasons of difficulties, however veterans themselves should be regarded as active participants of the process [5]. A number of researchers outline the potential of social entrepreneurship as a tool of veteran's reintegration as it combines the social and economic factors, enhances the role of a veteran in a community (J. Michael Haynie, Gary Shaheen, F. R. Blass, D. J. Ketchen, S. A. Kerrick, D. Cumberland, M. Church-Nally and others).

In our work, we would like to outline the potential of higher educational establishments to contribute to the development of social entrepreneurship in general and veterans' social entrepreneurship in particular.

There are several case studies that analysed the role of universities in developing social entrepreneurship. For example, interviews performed in USA, the UK, Ireland and Australia among ten senior-level academics that have practical experience in the (social) entrepreneurship and social innovation space, stated that universities have to play a bigger role in the development of the society, in particular by focusing on the role of students as the agents of change and creating educational programmes with the focus on entrepreneurship [8]. Another survey, that involved 380 university students in Bangladesh, showed that a university may foster social entrepreneurship among its graduated by creating an entrepreneurial network, fostering entrepreneurial education and providing a more clear university support to young entrepreneurs [4]. Data collected from the analysis of social enterprise cases in Singapore underlines the importance of mentor networks at universities with invited experts in the field of social entrepreneurship, as well as of the accelerator programmes that connect young people with potential customers and partners, and of course the infrastructural support facilities that a university may provide to its students [1]. Researches also support the idea that universities may support the development of social entrepreneurship by providing their students with transversal social entrepreneurship projects in various courses to make them more capable and self-confident [3] and by creating a more open-to-innovation environment, involving more lecturers competent in social entrepreneurship to teaching and basically including social entrepreneurship into the curricular [7].

Researches focusing on the activities of Ukrainian universities show that our higher educational establishments often have internal policies, supporting start-ups and innovation projects, or even directly implement

projects aimed at social entrepreneurship development in their communities and establish specialised centres for better management of the process [2]. Ukrainian researchers directly state the key role a university may play in developing the ecosystem of social entrepreneurship to support the reintegration of veterans through strategic planning, implementation of the universities' "third mission", formal inclusion of social entrepreneurship topic into the curriculum, as well as providing non-formal courses directed at developing necessary skills and knowledge [6].

From the practical side, it could be useful to analyse not only the students perception of the question, but also the readiness of university teachers, their understanding of the question and their role in this ecosystem.

There is an ongoing survey among lecturers of Chernihiv Polytechnic National University (Ukraine) that is organized by its young researchers based on the specially designed questioner that has a number of questions to define the level of teachers' awareness of the social entrepreneurship and its importance for the community and veterans' reintegration process, their attitude towards the university role in this process in general and their personal capabilities in influencing the situation. The answers are being collected both from senior academic staff and their junior colleagues, specializing in different fields of knowledge.

Preliminary results show that 71% of academic staff knows what social entrepreneurship is and almost 60% have some relevant topics in their curriculum. 86% believe social entrepreneurship is an effective tool for veterans' support, providing them with the possibility to: get employed in civil life (81%), implement their knowledge and skills (30%), realize their potential (27%), get financial support (9%). Three aspects of university activity are outlined as the key ones in this process: giving consultations to veterans on social entrepreneurship, implement study courses on social enterprises and motivate students to open social enterprises where veterans could be employed. At the same time, when asked how they personally can contribute to this process, the majority selects participation in round tables and seminars on social entrepreneurship (90%), giving students course projects on social entrepreneurship (85%) and forming necessary skills and knowledge within courses that are not directly related to social entrepreneurship (71%). We haven't received answers that would include their readiness to become mentors or get actively involved with veterans in any other form. The survey will be conducted till the end of December 2023 and a comprehensive analysis of its results will be published in 2024.

In conclusion, we may state that researchers all over the world study the potential of universities in the development of social entrepreneurship, stating the positive trends, as well as the spheres where improvements are needed. In Ukraine this question is strengthened by the need to support

veterans, the number of which is increasing with every year of the war. There some positive practices in this field and we believe that more findings and recommendation on the necessary practical steps will be made in the nearest future.

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