

Inclusion of Social Economy Topics into the Higher Education Business Study Programmes in Slovenia

Karolina Babič*

Abstract: The author is addressing the problem of systematic inclusion of the topics of social economy into the accredited higher education study programmes in Slovenia. To support the actuality of the research problem, education in social economy is shown as public policies priority on national and European level. The paper aims to answer the question of existence of social economy courses in the study programmes on business (and business-related management) and the question about correspondence of the content of these courses to the needs for competences of actors in the sector of social economy. The paper also presents different types of inclusion of the topics of social economy into the systems of higher education in Europe with the purpose to show possible directions for further development of social economy education in higher education system in Slovenia. The results of the research aim to have didactical, developmental and advocacy value and applicability.

Keywords: social economy; cooperatives; higher education; social economy training; social entrepreneurship

Vključevanje tematike socialne ekonomije v visokošolske poslovne študijske programe v Sloveniji

Povzetek: Avtorica naslavlja problem sistematičnega vključevanja tematike socialne ekonomije v akreditirane visokošolske študijske programe v Sloveniji. V podkrepitev aktualnosti tematike raziskovalnega problema je predstavljena prioriteta obravnava izobraževanja s področja socialne ekonomije v javnih politikah na državni in evropski ravni. Namen članka je odgovoriti na vprašanje o pojavnosti predmetov s tematiko socialne ekonomije v študijskih programih s področja poslovnih študijev (in študijev managementa v navezavi na poslovanje) in vprašanje, ali vsebina teh predmetov primerno odgovarja na potrebe po kompetencah akterjev v sektorju socialne ekonomije. Članek prav tako prikaže različne tipe vključevanja tematik socialne ekonomije v sisteme visokošolskega izobraževanja v Evropi z namenom, da se prikažejo različne možnosti za nadaljnji razvoj izobraževanja s področja socialne ekonomije v visokošolskem izobraževalnem sistemu v Sloveniji. Raziskava želi z rezultati doprinesiti didaktično, razvojno in zagovorniško vrednost in uporabnost.

Ključne besede: socialna ekonomija; zadruga; visokošolsko izobraževanje; usposabljanje v socialni ekonomiji; socialno podjetništvo.

* Sen. Lect., Dr., DOBA Business School,
Prešernova ulica 1, Maribor, Slovenia;
karolina.babic@net.doba.si.

How to cite this paper = Kako citirati ta članek: Babič, K. (2021). Inclusion of Social Economy Topics into the Higher Education Business Study Programmes in Slovenia. *Mednarodno inovativno poslovanje = Journal of Innovative Business and Management*, 13(1), 1-11. DOI: 10.32015/JIBM/2021.13.1.1-11.

© Copyrights are protected by = Avtorske pravice so zaščitene s Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) / Creative Commons priznanje avtorstva-nekomercialno 4.0 mednarodno licenco (CC BY-NC 4.0)

Mednarodno inovativno poslovanje = Journal of Innovative Business and Management
ISSN: 1855-6175

1 Introduction

1.1 The research problem

Development of social economy (SE) sector in Slovenia is part of public policies since passing the *The Social Entrepreneurship Act* in 2011. In amendment of the act in 2018 the notion of "social economy" was added in addition to the notion of "social entrepreneurship" in the law and the sector of social economy was defined as including: cooperatives, social enterprises, companies for employment of disabled people and employment centres and non-governmental organizations with market orientation (Social Entrepreneurship Act, 2018). In worldwide definitions of SE also mutual are included as part of this sector. In addition, development of this sector, of course, also requires special competences for managers, employees, members, and other stakeholders of these organizations, therefore the inclusion of proper courses on social economy into accredited study programmes on business and business-related management is necessary.

Before defining the research problem let us briefly mention that the use of terminology and classification of organizations in the sector of SE in Slovenia is a bit chaotic, for instance, terms "social economy" and "social entrepreneurship" are often mixed, "cooperatives" are sometimes presented as a prototype of organizational model of all social economy organizations, sometimes as one type of social economy organizations etc. For the purposes of this paper and in accordance with the latest national study on SE ordered by Ministry for economic development and technology of Republic of Slovenia (Babič and Dabič Perica, 2018) we will use terminology and classification as followed: social economy (SE) is a wider concept covering the complete sector of different types of organizations that have all three main SE characteristics:

1. It carries a social goal and social content, and it has social impact.
2. It conducts a market activity.
3. It is an organization of people and not an organization of capital and it has democratic and participatory governance model and limited profit-sharing rules.

These types of organizations are cooperatives, social enterprises (different legal entities with a status of social enterprise), companies for employment of disabled people and employment centres, non-governmental organizations with market orientation and mutual.

The research problem of this paper is the problem of systematic inclusion of the topics of social economy into the higher education study programmes in Slovenia.

In comparison, the percentage of employees in SE organizations in Slovenia is 2.7% of all employees in all sectors. And proposal was made to reach the 4.1% by 2029 in ten years strategic planning (Babič and Dabič Perica, 2018, pp. 79-80). In Europe there is 2.8 million enterprises and organisations giving 13.6 million jobs and creating 8% EU GDP (Social Economy Europe, 2020). Or even 10% of GDP as measured by European Commission (European Commission, 2011). In different sources there are different numbers on percentage of employees in the sector of SE, but it goes from 7% to 12% (CIRIEC, 2016; International Co-Operative Alliance, 2020).

Considering this low rate of development of SE in Slovenia and considering the three special characteristics of SE organizations mentioned above, we must admit that inclusion of specific topics of social economy into the accredited higher education studies is necessary.

1.2 Purpose and goals

The purpose of this paper is to identify and evaluate specific courses on the topics of social economy in accredited higher education study programmes on business (and business-related management) in Slovenia. We have no special goals in regard to quantitative research approach, we will only support this study with the clear count of existing study programs with included courses on SE topics. The main goal of the study is related to qualitative evaluation of identified study programmes on business and management in regard to the research question: do these programmes with included SE courses provide sufficient knowledge and skills to answer the needs for special competences of social economy actors in Slovenia on the level of accredited higher education (leaving aside the informal SE training)? To support the research path toward this goal another (side) research question will appear:

what are different types of inclusion of SE topics into the formal higher education systems in comparable European countries and what are the good practices of these different types? The main research question is leading us to the purpose of steering the future upgrading of existing SE courses and developing new SE courses. While the second (side) research question is leading us to the purpose of identifying what the type of inclusion of SE topics into the higher education system in Slovenia in comparison with existing other types of inclusion in some European countries is, to define new opportunities for inclusion of SE topics into the higher education system in Slovenia in the future.

2 Literature review

There seems to be no complete overview of higher education social economy courses in Slovenia, and there is only a few and partial on European or world level. But there are sufficient sources on the research topic that need to be presented in the paper to follow the purpose. With the literature review we will briefly show the importance of social economy sector for local and global economic and social development with presentation of main public policies documents and international declarations. Also, to show the awareness of the need for education in the field of SE on the level of European and national public policies. With a brief overview of approaches to the question of education in SE sector we will support our qualitative research and conclusions.

There are many high political level documents on European level that support the notion of social economy as an important agent of social and economic development in Europe. Most important of them are the following: *The Commission Social Business Initiative* (2011) that identified three strands of action that would make a real difference and improve the situation on the ground for social enterprises: improving access to finance, giving greater visibility to social enterprises and optimising the legal environment; and the follow up documents (European Commission, 2011). And also *Social Investment Package* (European Commission, 2013). Then there is 2014 *Strasbourg Declaration* that reaffirmed that social enterprises need to play a bigger role in the future of Europe whilst identifying new ideas and actions to unlock their potential to foster smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (*Strasbourg Declaration*, 2019). The *European Parliament resolution of 10 September 2015 on Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation in combating unemployment* stressed the role of social entrepreneurship and social innovation in combatting unemployment. These documents are holding the agenda of SE in Europe, along with many others on SE topics that we can find on official web sides of European Commission and of European Parliament. Slovenia has related mostly to Strasbourg Declaration in public policies argumentations in the last few years.

There are also many internationally accepted declarations and other legal documents to support cooperatives as the highly developed and thus prototype organizations of social economy. The most important one is *The Statement on Cooperative Identity* that presents the definition, the values and the operational principles of cooperatives worldwide and has been promoted through the global cooperative movement coordinated formally by International Co-operative Alliance that is covering the voice of more than a billion co-operators (cooperative members) in more than tri million cooperatives in all continents (International Co-operative Alliance, 1995). For Slovenia it is most important that the content of this statement was included in *The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Recommendation 193: Promotion of Cooperatives* by International Labour Organization (ILO) of which Slovenia is a member and is thus legally subject to follow the recommendations of this document (International Labour Organization, 2002).

For the topic of education in the field of SE the following document is very important: the Council of Europe in 2015 *Council Conclusions* recognises that "social economy /.../ plays an important role in the transformation and evolution of contemporary societies, welfare systems and economies. /.../ the social economy further contributes to several key EU objectives, including the achievement of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, high-quality employment, social cohesion, social innovation, local and regional development and environmental protection" (The Council of Europe, 2015, p. 2). And that is why the national public policies, and the European level public policies are recommended to "establish, implement, and further develop, as appropriate, European, national, regional and/or local strategies and programmes for enhancing the social economy, social entrepreneurship, and social innovation" (ibid, p. 6). All of that in the areas of "awareness, recognition and education. /.../ for instance, by encouraging the inclusion of social economy-related topics in the curricula and the activities of all levels of education and training" (ibid, p. 6-7).

Also, the recommendations of the umbrella organization for social economy in Europe, that were made based on cooperation with European Parliament's Social Economy Intergroup are as following: "Foster social economy entrepreneurship, by encouraging the inclusion of the social economy in the curricula of all levels of education and

training. (Policy measure 3) /.../ Carry out a study on social economy entrepreneurship education in Europe, covering all levels of education and training (*action 7*). /.../ Set up a voluntary method of coordination between Member States, coordinated by the European Commission, to perform peer reviews, improve the exchange of good practices and the implementation of the guidelines on the promotion of social economy education (*action 8*) /.../ Support the promotion of social, technological and environmental innovation in education, in collaboration with social economy organisations and through European programmes on education and research, via (*action 9*)" (Social Economy Europe, 2018, pp. 11-13).

Also similar recommendations are coming from one of the oldest research and promotion organization in this area CIRIEC, which says »A current challenge is to create a European Higher Education Area specialising in this field« (CIRIEC, 2016, p. 42).

Also, Slovenia legally admits the need and promises support for SE education. In the second paragraph of 32nd article of Social Entrepreneurship Act there is a notion that also education for social entrepreneurship will be fostered by the state with special measures for development of social entrepreneurship. And also in the 38th article of the same Act fostering of education of managers of social enterprises is noted (Social Entrepreneurship Act, 2018).

Furthermore, as for the didactical matters of education on topics of social economy there are of course many different studies and handbooks offering suggestions about what study goals, study content and targeted competences in the field of SE are to be followed. And regarding that also many different curriculums have been developed worldwide. We can find at least three different strands on this question:

1. Theoretical and practical studies of social and solidarity economy that have strong political economy bases and where very different authors like Jeremy Rifkin, Paulo Freire, Elinor Ostrom etc. can be recognized in the background of this approach. In this paper we will lean strongly on the competence research by one of such studies that provided a very useful handbook for SE education and training (Meredith et al., 2015).
2. Business oriented social entrepreneurship education programs that follow the conventional business curriculums but upgrading them with strong emphasis on topics of social inclusion, social innovation, social impact, social investing, democratic governance etc. One of most known researchers and teachers of this kind would be Rory Ridley-Duff (Rory Ridley-Duff, 2020).
3. Cooperative education and training that has the longest history just like cooperatives have the longest and most developed history among all organizations of SE sector. Cooperative education has been systematically developing since the beginning of cooperative global movement in 1844 in Lancashire in England. And even before this, for instance *The Brighton Institute* in 1825 or *Owenite Co-operative School* in the 30s of the 19th Century (International Co-operative Alliance, 2015, p. 57). Education is also one of the seven main principles of cooperatives mentioned above and many contemporary researchers in the field of cooperatives are also dedicated to special importance of cooperative education and training, like Claudia Sanchez Bajo in the scope of global cooperative development of all types of cooperatives from social, worker, industrial, artisan, housing and other cooperatives (Sanchez Bajo and Roelants, 2011) or like Woodin (2014) or like Gimenes in the field of agricultural cooperatives (Gimenes et al., 2016).

3 Methodology of the study

As mentioned above the methodology of the study is qualitative. In one part it is original qualitative research (evaluation of SE courses in Slovenia) and in one part is supported with secondary analysis (in competence research and partly in presentation of types of inclusion of SE topics into the higher education systems).

To identify accredited programmes on business (and business-related management) we have conducted a full inspection of NAKVIS evidence of accredited higher education study programmes in Slovenia (in all universities and independent higher education institutes) (NAKVIS, 2020). To identify such programmes, we analysed the titles of the programmes based on including or not the following word-indicators: business, management, and organization (in relation to business), economy, economic, economics. The programmes on business (and business-related management) identified in previous step have been further analysed (web pages of the institutions) to identify existing courses on social economy. The titles of all the courses in these programmes were analysed based on including or not the following word-indicators: social economy, social enterprise/entrepreneurship, cooperatives/cooperativism, social and solidarity economy, social innovation/impact/inclusion. In this way

identified courses on social economy were further analysed in their content (syllabuses) and in conclusions compared with identified needed competences of social economy actors. Qualitative analysis of the found courses was conducted on the following typology.

1. *Formal questions:* Is the course on BA or MA or doctoral level? How many ECTS brings the course, is the course mandatory or elective, what is the teaching method (classical, online, blended)?
2. *Content related questions:* Is the course covering conventional business learning content, which topics from special social economy content is the course covering: social economy in general, cooperativism, social entrepreneurship, social innovation, social inclusion, social impact measurement, theoretical questions regarding social and solidarity economy and political economy, public policies, governance in social economy organizations?

To present identified competences needed by the actors in the SE sector we did not conduct our own study since there has been such studies worldwide with good instruction books as outcomes of the studies, so we followed the instruction of one of such studies. We have chosen this handbook since it is covering the first of three above mentioned approaches to SE education and is therefore wide enough to cover the situation of SE in Slovenia: it covers the content of all three main characteristics of SE organizations and is applicable to the notion of SE by the Slovenian legal and practical environment. Listed needed competences were classified into three groups answering to three main characteristics of SE organizations. Also, there has been a small partial study on the question of needed competences in Slovenia that we will briefly present.

To present the possible types of inclusion of SE topics into the study programs outside our state borders we will present four case studies from Europe and offer short descriptions of these four types or ways of inclusion of SE topics into the higher education systems.

In discussion we will show the results about identified courses in business study programmes in Slovenia with emphasis on the content related questions and will compare the offer of the courses with the need for competences and show the deviations.

In conclusion we will present these deviations as opportunities for refreshing existing courses on SE and for developing new courses on SE. Also, in conclusion we will compare the Slovenian type of including SE topics into the study programmes with the four identified different types of including SE topics in the selected cases in Europe; so, to show the path for new possible ways for development of SE programmes and courses in higher education in Slovenia.

4 Results of the study

4.1 Identification of existing courses on social economy in Slovenia and the content of these courses

Analysis of NAKVIS evidence of accredited higher education study programmes in Slovenia (in all universities and independent higher education institutes) was conducted in summer 2020 in accordance with above stated methodology and gave us the following results:

- We found (among 1021 programmes listed in NAKVIS evidence) 88 accredited higher education study programmes that cover the field of business or management in relation to business.
- These 88 programmes are held by 27 different higher education institutions.
- Out of these 88 programmes 37 are BA level, 41 are MA level, 10 are doctoral level.
- 6 of the 27 different higher education institutions are offering the courses on social economy topics in their programmes (3 independent higher education institution and 3 faculties of public universities).
- 0 of these 88 programmes is as an entire programme dedicated to the topic of social economy.
- 9 of these 88 programmes are offering the courses on social economy (one course each).
- 6 of these courses are on BA level and all of them are facultative.
- 3 of these courses are on MA level and 2 of them are mandatory and 1 facultative.

It is surprising to find 9 study programmes with SE courses, we expected less. It shows as an unpleasant surprise that all of the SE courses on BA level are elective type, we expected some of them to be also mandatory. We also

have to stress out, that there is probably more of SE courses in some other higher education programmes that are not business (and business-related management), for sure we can say there is one such course in the program of social care. But the limitations of our study and the sample and indicators in our methodology didn't cover such programmes.

Interpretation of content related questions: as we have subscribed special areas of content in the SE courses to the common classifications, we could firstly see that there are, in general overview, two different approaches present: some more of the first type (theoretical general education on social economy) and some more of the second type of approach to SE education (business oriented with additional social topics). Only one is more of the third type (cooperative training-based type of the course).

Table 1. Results on identified SE courses in Slovenia (by typology)

Course no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Formal questions									
Level of study	BA	BA	BA	BA	BA	BA	MA	MA	MA
Mandatory / elective	elective	elective	elective	elective	elective	elective	mandatory	mandatory	elective
No. of ECTS	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7
Teaching method	classical	classical	classical	classical	classical	online	online	classical	classical
Content related questions									
Conventional business learning content	*		*	*	*	*			*
Special social economy content:									
Social economy in general		*				*	*	*	
Cooperativism						*	*		
Social entrepreneurship	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Social innovation			*			*	*		*
Social inclusion	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Social impact measurement	*		*	*	*			*	*
Theoretical questions regarding social and solidarity economy and political economy		*			*	*	*	*	
Public policies		*				*	*	*	
Governance in social economy organizations	*			*	*	*	*		*

Note: course no. 1 and no. 4 are held by the same institution, course no. 2 and no. 8 are held by the same institution, course no. 6 and no. 7 are held by the same institution. Many of classical teaching methods are in the past months being transferred to blended due to the pandemic. Source: author.

Since the number of analysed courses is very small, any additional grouping on basis of different possible classifications would not give us any meaningful information. But there is a lot of (for didactical purposes) useful conclusions that we can make based on the analysis of the content related questions about the SE courses. We said in the introduction, there are three main characteristics of SE organizations, and that education should in a way cover all three. So, if we stop at the first one, social aspect of the SE sector: social inclusion, social innovation and social impact is mostly well covered. If we look at the second characteristic, the business aspect of SE sector: some of the courses also cover conventional business content, but since all of these courses are part of study programmes in business or business-related management, it is reasonable not to give too much stress to conventional business knowledge here, since this is most likely covered by other courses on such programmes. As for the third characteristic of SE sector, the democratic and participatory governance and limited profit-sharing, there is in some courses the content on special type of governance mentioned, but it is not clear if the democratic governance and participatory economy values are presented and if the question of limited profit-sharing is clearly presented in the course.

It is also notable in the results that SE courses are mostly (7 out of 9) among elective offers. This is in a way expected since SE sector in Slovenia has a very low share of total business activity. If we take into consideration entire SE sector (alongside cooperatives and social enterprises also companies for people with disabilities and employment

centres and NGOs) SE sector employs all together 2.7% of all employees in all companies and public and private organizations in Slovenia, as showed in introduction of this article. If we consider only cooperatives and social enterprises, we are below 1%. Considering this current market situation on SE sector in Slovenia it seems understandable to offer these courses as elective in business studies. Thou, it would be developmentally of great use to SE sector if at least some basic content about social economy would be placed as mandatory in business studies, even if not in form of special mandatory courses. But, on the other hand, SE courses should be included as mandatory in the studies of management related to social studies, for instant in social care or NGO organization studies, but making conclusions on this would exceed the content of results of this research. As for some additional interpretation findings, it is not surprising, that most of the courses are promoted (by the title and prevalent content) as “social entrepreneurship” and not “social economy” courses. Since social entrepreneurship has been strongly politically promoted in past decade in Slovenia and in Europe, and that the notion of “cooperatives” is not present strongly in the content of the courses since there is historical aversion toward cooperatives in Slovenia since the change of political and economic system after 1991. Also, it is not to be left out that there is obvious lack of content on the topic of SE public policies and of theoretical questions regarding social and solidarity economy and political economy. The latter we can interpret as the result of the programmes and courses being more practically directed, but the former is not understandable, since understanding integration of SE into public policies (and thus public finance) is important part of hybrid business modelling in SE organizations.

4.2 Identified needs for competences of social economy actors (secondary analysis)

In Slovenia there has been some partial studies on competences for SE, all of them giving only a self-assessment of needs of actors in SE sector, like this one: »Stakeholders were divided on their perception of certain key barriers. /.../ This shortage of entrepreneurial skill and knowledge was also interpreted as one of the key barriers to social enterprise development due to insufficient governmental support, as few educational programmes dedicate themselves specifically to social enterprises« (Rakar and Kolarič, 2019, 72).

In 2018 Erasmus+ project »Youth creates: partnership for the development of social entrepreneurship education« conducted analysis of comparison of the needed competences for conventional and social entrepreneurship. The study was carried out in Slovenia, Hungary, and Croatia. The study results tried to show similarities and differences between competences for conventional and social entrepreneurship (Project Consortium - Youth Creates: Partnership for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship Education, 2017). They stressed out specific competences for social entrepreneurship: ability to understand one’s own wishes and need, empathy, ability to have a creative vision, motivation for realization of an idea, persistence, creativity and authenticity, openness to new knowledge and skills, ability to network and exchange of information and knowledge, mobilization of new people, financial and marketing literacy, business orientation (ibid, 9-24). We must comment on this study, that it is not shown why these competences are different from competences for conventional entrepreneurship. In a similar formulation all these competences are recognized also as competences for the conventional entrepreneurs.

Globally, there has been quite a holistic competence study made in 2012-2015 Erasmus research project “Enhancing Studies and Practice of the Social Economy in Higher Education”, we have mentioned it above in literature review. Authors analysed 1025 SE organizations in 3 continents. On the basis of results, they formulated areas of competences (with additional explanations and descriptors of competences) that we are listing in the table:

Table 2. Competences for actors in SE sector

<i>Area of competence</i>	<i>Explanations and descriptors of competences</i>
Epistemology of social solidarity economy, values, and attitudes	Understand the topic and interconnection of epistemology, values, attitudes in SSE (note: SSE meaning “social and solidarity economy)
International perspectives and human rights	Understand key human rights in different areas of the world and in relation to different sub questions
Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME), adapted for SSE	Demonstrate knowledge and critical analysis of the six PRME principles applied to SSE
Identity and profile	To have knowledge and understanding of the criteria and multiple meanings of the social and solidarity economy as a system and a legitimate body of theory
SSE and regional development	To understand how the SSE is framing how to exist and work in the field of regional development, without policies and/or strategic guidelines, in both rural and urban areas

<i>Area of competence</i>	<i>Explanations and descriptors of competences</i>
Systemic management of the social enterprise	To know and understand management of SSE organisations from a systemic, integrated and ethical perspective: Social aim; Total systemic perspective of the social change; Sustainable enterprise practices; Different clients and/or beneficiaries; The market and marketing; Ethical standards; Raising investment and crowdfunding; Model of investment and income; Legal aspects; Teamwork; Cost structure and reinvestment
Effective practice in social media communication	Have a clear understanding of how to maximise the use of social media in building and engaging community; Education for change; Democratic participation; Accountability; Advocacy; Ethical branding; Fundraising & crowdfunding
Social media use	The practical knowledge and understanding of the use of diverse social media
Social Capital: knowledge, values and attitudes	Gain an integral understanding of the role and the levels of social capital in the creation and sustainability of a social and solidarity economy: Individual Social Capital; Organisational Social Capital; Community Social Capital
Evidence and indicators of social capital	Clearly understand how to design relevant and appropriate indicators to demonstrate the change and impact of social capital of social and solidarity organisations
Social Responsibility and Transformation (SRT)	Develop a holistic understanding about the political, social, cultural, and environmental responsibility and transformation: Individual transformation; Community well-being; Care for environment; Economic sustainability
Creation and demonstration of evidence of SRT	Create and demonstrate evidence for social responsibility and transformation

Source: Table prepared on the basis of results in the handbook "Enhancing Studies and Practice of the Social Economy in Higher Education" (Meredith et al., 2015, pp. 16-26)

We can see that the areas of competences here are quite different from the groups/areas of content of the courses as we have pulled out from the existing SE courses in Slovenia. Some of the content corresponds to these needed competences but some competences are not addressed by the content of the courses; we will make some conclusions on this in the following chapter of discussion.

4.3 Different types of including SE topics into the higher education systems: examples from Europe

When overlooking the existing study programmes and courses elsewhere in Europe, we have noticed different approaches for inclusion of social economy topics into higher education systems and here we are presenting a short description of one case of each type. We do not propose that our *ad hoc* overview is covering all of the possible types, but the decision to set this typology is based on years of personal observation and collaboration in the SE sector development.

Table 3. Types of including SE topics into the higher education system in Europe.

	Type description	Examples
1 st type	There is no special study programme for social economy but there are specific courses on social economy as elective or mandatory courses in conventional business or management study programmes on Bachelor or Master level.	CBS - Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
2 nd type	There is a special study programme on Bachelor or Master level, that covers complete business and/or management study in the field of social economy.	University of Liège, Belgium (Together with UC Louvain University)
3 rd type	There is specialistic study as accredited business study program at university in strong cooperation with expert sectoral organizations or NGOs in the field of social economy.	CG Scop, France (with Paris-Dauphine University)
4 th type	There is a special institution like university or faculty, or college specialized in the field of social economy.	University of Mondragon, Spain (Baskia) Co-operative College (England)

Source: author

We will shortly present one example (case) for each type to present the special characteristics of this type of inclusion of social economy topics into the higher education system.

Case 1: The case of social economy courses at CBS - Copenhagen Business School: social entrepreneurship is an integral part of core courses and electives at both the BA and MA level. They offer following courses: Introduction to Social Entrepreneurship (Elective Bachelor); Social Entrepreneurship: Creating Social Change Using the Power of

Entrepreneurship (Elective Master); Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship (Mandatory Master); Re-imagining capitalism (Elective Master); Tourism Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainability (Mandatory Bachelor). All the courses have 7,5 ETCS. The courses cover only the specialistic content that differs from conventional business and management courses, since these SE courses are part of conventional business study programmes. The content in all courses covers wide theoretical background for social economy and have strong emphasis on applicability of knowledge to practice (Copenhagen Business School - CBS, 2020).

This type is, as we could see, prevalent (only) type in Slovenia.

Case 2: The case of “Specialized master’s in social economy” at University of Liège: programme that combines a “management” component supported by HEC-Liège (ULiège) and a “socio-economic” component supported by FOPES (UCLouvain). They offer the acquisition of knowledge and theoretical, practical, and methodological tools that are useful and necessary to understand and master the issues underlying the social economy from a multidisciplinary perspective. The programme counts 60 ETCS. The courses of the programme cover specialized topics of SE: social economy, ethics of social economy, social innovation and public policies, social economy and transition of ecology and society. And on the other hand courses related to conventional business studies but adjusted to SE: management in social economy (finance and governance), finance reporting and social impact reporting and social investment; economy of ecology and management of transition, strategic management of social economy (Specialized Master in Social Economy, 2020).

Case 3: The case of special cooperation of SG Scop as a federation of worker cooperatives that is collaborating with Paris-Dauphine University in offering a specialized management programme on the topic of “cooperative management”. Since SG Scop is not educational organization but a federation of cooperatives, they can only provide non-accredited short courses for cooperative members, board members and managers, but in cooperation with a university they can together offer also an accredited cooperative management full study programme (SG Scop Training, 2020).

Case 4: The case of Mondragon University: Mondragon University was created in 1997 by the association of three educational cooperatives, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Business Studies and Faculty of Humanities and Education Sciences. In 2011 the Culinary Science Faculty also joined. The Mondragon University represents special type of inclusion of SE topics into the higher education system because on one hand the university itself is a SE organization since all the Faculties are organised as cooperatives that are run by members (who are teachers and students), and on the other hand the university is part of Mondragon Cooperative system that holds together 98 worker cooperatives with more than 80 thousand employees (worker-members) and has its own research centres and a cooperative bank and a social security system, so the cooperative university is not only offering different studies but is actually living proof of sustainable cooperative social and economic system. The programmes at the faculties on one hand offer specific studies like engineering or business or teaching, but on the other hand the programmes include the cooperative special knowledge and skills like in cooperative governance and cooperative membership issues, since many of student latter get employed in Mondragon cooperatives. (Mondragon Unibertsitatea, 2020) Just to mention, also such type is The Co-operative College in England that is just now in the process of forming a cooperative university (Co-Operative College, 2020).

5 Discussion

As we have set out to research the inclusion of the social economy topics into the higher education study programmes in business (and business-related management) in Slovenia, we followed the goals of finding the SE courses and to analyse the content of these courses so it would be comparable to the needed competences of actors in SE sector. As for the number of identified SE courses we must be satisfied, since the sector in Slovenia is very young and just in the early phase of development. As for the content of the courses, they are very much subject to primal goals of the programmes in which these courses are included, some more in the theoretical and general direction, some in more practical and business-oriented direction. In the comparison of the content of SE courses to the needs for competences we can see that SE courses in Slovenia leave out the topics of global overview that is strongly connected to the topics of SE, since the changes in global economy are the main motivator for development of SE. In this perspective, most of the SE courses miss out the topics of human rights and empowerment, the topics of economic migration, global ecology questions, ethics, intercultural questions, questions of transition,

local/regional/national/global developmental policies, and related questions. None of the courses covers the epistemological underling of SE or deeper political economy topics.

As intermezzo, in worldwide discussion there is a constant dispute that follows the development of SE and is dividing the SE researchers and teacher and practitioners into two poles: the first is the "soft" version of understanding of social economy organizations as enterprises with special social characteristics, meaning that SE organizations are some kind of a business with social aspect or with a social goal and social impact. Perhaps Rory Ridley-Duff would stand on this side. The second notion is the "hard" one saying that social economy organizations are completely different kind of social and economic collaborations of people and therefore they cannot be described as companies or businesses with special social attributes, but on contrary, as associations of people with common interests one of which is also making a common business. The author of this paper would stand on this side, following researcher like Claudia Sanchez Bajo and others. We can notice this differentiation also in the content of the courses that we have analysed, some show tendency to the "soft" version of SE, some to the "hard" one.

If we return to the main research question on how are existing courses on social economy responding to the needs for competences of SE actors in Slovenia? We have seen that in both Slovenian studies on competences the actors from SE sector spoke about missing the knowledge and skill which is the same for conventional entrepreneur. This shows that actors in social economy sector don't (at least not in general) resonate much on special competences that they may in practice already have or they lack them, but are not aware of them, and at the same time they are aware of missing out the conventional business skills. But we must not misinterpret this as the indicator of actual needs for competences in SE sector. That is why we have included in secondary analysis the handbook "Enhancing Studies and Practice of the Social Economy in Higher Education" that developed a competence classification based on the many levels study (theoretical background, global view, practical issues in different continents, local applicability of SE etc.). The comparison of SE courses in Slovenia with these findings on competences show, that we should in some aspects upgrade our courses with more global and developmental perspective. The difference that shows here is whether SE organizations are seen as mere correctors of social injustice in local dimensions or are seen as developmental forces with perspective to change the society to become more just, inclusive, and safe for all people and nature in global and timeless perspective. Educational goals that follow the first perspective and those that follow the second prospective will give ground for different curriculums. We believe that the courses in Slovenia should change perspective from (now prevalent) first perspective to the second one.

As for the second (side) research question about different types of inclusion of SE topics into the formal higher education systems in comparable European countries, the question about which type is prevalent in Slovenia, we have shown clearly that only one type is developed at the moment, that SE courses are included in business programmes, mostly as elective courses. We have no special programmes on the topic of SE in Slovenia, much fewer special faculties or colleges or universities of this kind. This opens us to further development. We must not be overambitious to expect to grow special faculties or even university for social economy in Slovenia, but to start full study programmes on these topics in both possible scenarios is not overambitious: to develop full SE study programmes at faculties (as we have seen in the case from Belgium) or to develop full SE programmes on faculties in cooperation with professional NGO organizations from the SE sector that are not educational organizations and therefore can only provide unofficial training but not accredited study programmes (as we have seen in the case from France).

There are of course some limitations of this study. First, in the evidence of accredited study programmes we might have missed out relevant ones due to misunderstanding of the titles of the programmes. Also, although we have found all of the identified programmes on business and management presented online, not all had clearly outlined curriculums published, so it is possible that the content of the courses was not presented in detail and therefore not properly analysed. Also, as known, teachers often teach different content than presented in official curriculums. We are also aware that the classification of content of the courses and classification of the competences and therefore also their comparison could be conducted by different methodology if the research approach would be different. This we leave open to further research.

6 Conclusions

This paper has a sole ambition of giving basic overview in social economy education situation to those who are holders of courses on SE topics in Slovenia, for them to critically look at their curriculums, to re-evaluate them, maybe

to upgrade them. And to give some basis to those who are in preparation of new programmes that might include courses on SE or even full SE programmes. This paper also aims at public policies developers and policies makers to consider, that education in social economy is proven to be one of the priorities in Slovenia and Europe and is therefore eligible for public financing. And finally, this paper aims at actors of social economy to help them find their way to more systematically education and training for the members, managers and employees of SE organizations. To summarize, this paper aims to be a didactical help to those who develop curriculums, an advocacy paper for those who are addressing public policies makers, and motivational and support letter to those who work hard every day as actors and generators and promoters of social economy. And is, of course, open to discussion with social economy researchers.

References

1. Babič, K. and Dabič Perica, S. (2018). Aplikativna analiza stanja na področju socialne ekonomije v Republiki Sloveniji. http://socialnaekonomija.si/wp-content/uploads/Analiza_stanja_na_podrocju_socialne_ekonomije_v_Sloveniji.pdf.
2. CIRIEC. (2016). *Recent Evolutions of the Social Economy in the European Union: Issue CES/CSS/12/2016/23406*. DOI: 10.3935/rsp.v25i2.1543.
3. Co-operative College. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.co-op.ac.uk/>.
4. Copenhagen Business School – CBS. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.cbs.dk/> [Retrieved on 10 August 2020].
5. European Commission. (2011). Social Business Initiative of the European Commission. Ref. Ares (2015)5946494-18/12/2015.
6. European Commission. (2013). Social Investment Package. Retrieved from: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1044&newsId=1807&furtherNews=yes>.
7. Gimenes, R.M.T.G., Tapia, D.V., Binotto, E., & Gimenes, F.M.P. (2016). Cooperative Educational Training, Participation and Satisfaction: A Case Study in Agricultural Cooperatives. *International Journal of Emerging Research in Management & Technology*, 5(6), 42-54.
8. HEC Liège University. (2020). Specialized Master's in Social Economy. HEC Liège, Management School - Liège University. <http://www.hec.ulg.ac.be/en/masters/specialized-master-in-social-economy>.
9. International Co-operative Alliance. (1995). The Statement on the Cooperative Identity. <https://www.ica.coop/en/cooperatives/cooperative-identity>.
10. International Co-operative Alliance. (2015). Guidance Notes to the Co-operative Principles. www.ica.coop.
11. International Co-operative Alliance. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.ica.coop/en>.
12. International Labour Organization. (2002). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Recommendation 193: Promotion of Cooperatives. http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R193.
13. Meredith, M. & Quiroz Niño, C. (Coords.), Arando, S., Coelho, L.S., Silva, M.F. & Villafuerte Pezo, A. M. (2015). *Enhancing studies of the social and solidarity economy: A reference handbook*. York St John-Erasmus Social and Solidarity Economy Consortium.
14. Mondragon Unibertsitatea. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.mondragon.edu/en/home>.
15. NAKVIS. (2020). Javne evidence. <https://www.nakvis.si/akreditacije-in-evalvacije-v-visokem-solstvu/javne-evidence/>.
16. Project Consortium - Youth Creates: Partnership for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship Education. (2017). Strokovne podlage: identifikacija in analiza kompetenc in znanj za socialno podjetništvo. <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details/#project/2015-3-SI02-KA205-013260>.
17. Rakar, T. and Kolarič, Z. (2019). *Social enterprises and their eco-systems. Updated Country Report: Slovenia. Luxembourg*. European Commission. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. doi: 10.2767/73650.
18. Rory Ridley-Duff. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.roryridleyduff.com/>.
19. Sanchez Bajo, C. and Roelants, B. (2011). *Capital and the Debt Trap: Learning from Cooperatives in the Global Crisis*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: 10.1057/9780230308527.
20. SG Scop training. (2020). Formation cadres-dirigeants. <https://www.les-scop.coop/formations-cadres-dirigeants>.
21. Social Economy Europe. (2018). The Future of EU policies for the Social Economy: Towards a European Action Plan. <https://www.cases.pt/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/SEE-Action-Plan-for-Social-Economy.pdf>.
22. Social Economy Europe. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.socialeconomy.eu.org/>.
23. *Social Entrepreneurship Act (ZSocP-NPB št. 2)* (2018). Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 13.
24. *Strasbourg Declaration*. (2019). *Testimony of European Economic and Social Committee*. <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/strasbourg-declaration-2019>.
25. The Council of Europe. (2015). The Promotion of the Social Economy as a Key Driver of Economic and Social Development in Europe - Council Conclusions (7 December 2015), Vol. 15071/15. <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/documents/promotion-social-economy-key-driver-economic-and-social-development-europe-council-conclusions>.
26. Woodin, T. (2014). *Co-operation, Learning and Co-operative Values: Contemporary Issues in Education*. London: Routledge.