

Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation - 2010-1-FR1-LE005-14505
Ecole Supérieure de Commerce et de Management de Tours-Poitiers (ESEM)
*ARIADNE, the managerial guidance in Social Economy based on intrinsic skills,
competences and values: commitment, behaviour and motivation*

ARIADNE – FEEDBACKS FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS Euricse

We conducted 2 separate focus groups with a total of 10 participants. We also conducted an anonymous survey of 30 managers during the registration process of the IRIS Network workshop and have included the results at the end of this document. We do not know the characteristics of the organizations represented in that survey.

1. The **characteristics** of the social enterprises managed by the persons you met:
 - a. *The size of the social enterprise (small : 5-10, medium : 10-50, big : >50 persons)*

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Small: 5-10 persons | 40% |
| Medium: 10-50 persons | 30% |
| Big >50 persons | 30% |
 - b. *The legal forms (NPO, coop, others)*

Most of the participants are from cooperatives since this is the most widely used form in the Italian social economy.

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Cooperative | 60% (1 work int., 4 social service, 1 coop) |
| Consortium/representative org | 20% |
| Other Non-profit org | 20% |
 - c. *The subsidization of the social enterprise (strongly subsidized or not; market versus non market resources)*

Strongly subsidized are those that receive primarily public financing either directly or by contracts. *Mixed* are those that have contracts with the both the public and private sector. *Market* are those organizations that have primarily fee for service on the open market.

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Strongly subsidized | 40% |
| Mixed | 30% |
| Market | 30% |
 - d. *The rural-urban aspect*

The organizations that participated in the 2 focus groups are from the Trentino area, working in both urban and rural settings. We can say that 2 organizations are

based in a rural area and the others are based in the urban center, but they all span both.

e. *Other Characteristics:*

The participants of the focus groups were mostly the senior management or top management. Three are younger than 35 years old, seven were older.

2. The **biggest challenges** of the managers:

a. For each participant, what are the biggest challenges in his managers' work? (in few words)

The biggest challenge for all the participants has to do with the **sustainability of the organization for the future**. The responses were divided into 3 sub-themes:

- **economic and financial sustainability** (specific responses: Guaranteeing economic continuity and sustainability, Finding funding streams outside of public contracts, business development)

- **policy and institutions** (specific responses: Uncertainty for the future of the organization, Influencing decision-makers, Responding to the real demands and needs of the consumers, fee for service to the public administration, cross contamination with other realities)

- **relationships** (specific responses: communicating about the core mission, Engaging and involving members, Generational turnover, Involve new people)

3. About the seven main competences:

a. Before we showed them the KSC framework, we asked them what they thought was the most important competency for a manager in the social economy and they answered:

- **values and motivations** (specific responses: Being able to attract people to the cause of the organization, Being able to raise awareness, being passionate and inspired about your work)

- **Stakeholders and context** (specific responses: Knowing your context and involving all the stakeholders including staff and external, Relating to stakeholders - especially external, Relational skills, managing relationships)

- **Business and human resource management skills** (specific responses: Technical skills, Ability to delegate and evaluate based on organizational objectives, Being able to put the different skills of each person together)
- **Proactivity** (specific responses: Innovation – listening and interpreting consumer demand, Creativity in finding solutions)

b. In global (or person by person if you prefer), what have been the main comments/feedbacks/points of attention on the seven main competences specific to the management in the social economy?

In general the managers thought it was a good overview of the necessary competences for management in the social economy. Some thought that the relational and values areas should be somehow shown as more important than others. Some specifics that they thought were missing are:

- Developing a social balance sheet
- accounting and presenting social achievements
- knowing how to work with uncertainty
- Flexibility and mental elasticity – being open-minded
- knowing how to attain new skills and improve one's skills (knowing where to look)
- Volunteer management (attract, maintain, reward, recognize)
- Conflict management and resolution (between competing missions/business development, between stakeholders, between oversight bodies, etc)
- The ability to identify market opportunities (new sectors of activity, new business)
- Knowing how to activate skills you don't have (like legal)
- Patience
- Technical skills pertaining to the sector you operate in (for ex. If you're in the agricultural sector, you should know something about farming)

c. What has naturally emerged, what is less pregnant, what is more important?

We asked both groups to **prioritize each item in the KSC framework** on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = not important, 10 = very important). A total of 10 people did this. The attached excel file has the totals for each item – it is in Italian, but each line matches the English KSC framework. Yellow corresponds to the higher votes (more important), red corresponds to the lower votes.

- **The 2 families with the highest votes** are #3 (*To develop a strategy allowing to sustain the SE's multiple goals*) and #7 (*To manage the human resources*).
- **The family with the lowest votes** is #1 (*To know, understand and being able to position the social economy*).

- The 3 items with the highest votes are:

- To anticipate the future social needs
- To translate the missions into very concrete objectives and goals
- Creativity

- The 3 items with the lowest votes are:

- The different concepts, peculiar to the social economy (non-profit, social economy, social enterprise, third sector, etc.)
- The history of the sector
- To make of the lobbying

4. Concerning the ways to learn those competences:

a. How did the managers acquire those competences?

Relational skills – on the job

Technical skills – on the job or post-graduate/professional training

One said 50% in studies and 50% on the job, but everyone else said mostly on the job and in professional training (particularly for economic, human resources, and fundraising)

b. How would they like to learn those main competences?

They all agreed there is a continuous need for professional development and training. Regarding the format, they suggested:

- Short, specific courses on targeted topics
- Case studies and first person accounts
- Comparing best practices
- small groups with a climate open to participation from all
- Peer exchange opportunities
- Personal experience sharing, also internationally

5. Training needs

During the discussion, we asked the participants what skills and competences they feel they need to face their organizations' challenges and what skills they need to personally develop. The following list summarizes what topics the participants would like to see in future trainings:

- **Stakeholders and context** (specific responses: Communicating to external stakeholders and promoting involvement, To develop a feeling of membership and pride to belong to the social economy , Managing relationships with internal

stakeholders and helping them improve performance, Managing relationships with members and internal governing boards)

- **Business and human resource management skills** (specific responses: Writing a business plan, Fundraising, Ability to shape the organization to be favorable to generational turnover – open the organization more - Delegate and give opportunities to the younger and more recent hires, Combining development strategies with the values of the organization)
- **Proactivity** (specific responses: Identify new sectors of activity, Entrepreneurship, Perceiving future trends, Facing uncertainty and adapting objectives of the organization in a flexible way)

6. IRIS Survey Feedback:

As stated at the beginning, we also conducted an anonymous survey of 30 managers during the registration process of the IRIS Network workshop. We do not know the characteristics of the organizations represented in the survey. The answers do not correspond exactly with the KSC framework (due to the way it was translated into Italian), but you can easily see the similarities.

There were 2 questions:

- a) What are the 5 competences (from a list taken from the Ariadne competency list) that, as a social entrepreneur or worker in the social sector, have you most developed in your work?

Top responses to question 1 (most important):

Anticipate future needs and develop new projects
To manage the human resources
Stakeholder management (internal and external)
Promote the values and mission of the organization and the social economy

Lowest responses to question 1 (least important):

Manage the production inputs - material and technical resources (this is not in the KSC)
Stakeholder management (internal and external)
To develop a feeling of membership and raising awareness
Adaptability to the context and stakeholder requests

- b) What are the 5 competences that you do not currently have, but that you would like to develop in the next 5 years?

Top responses to question 2 (most important):

Anticipate future needs and develop new projects
To manage the administrative and financial aspects
To develop a feeling of membership and raising awareness
Adaptability to the context and stakeholder requests

Lowest responses to question 2 (least important):

To position your social enterprise - Understand the concrete objectives of the organization: the mission and business principles.
Ability to analyze, interpret, and summarize information (this is not in the KSC)
Raise awareness and share achievements and information
Ability for self evaluation and self-knowledge (this is not in the KSC)