

THE REGIONAL STUDY AND GUIDELINES ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

The RISE (Regional Incubator for Social Entrepreneurs) consortium publishes its regional study and guidelines on social entrepreneurship in the Western Balkans.

Developed and conducted by the two researchers, Teo Petricevic and Jelena Andjelic, and coordinated by the RISE consortium, the document provides the most recent, relevant, and concise information on the current state of social entrepreneurship and youth entrepreneurship in the Western Balkans. The document focuses on policy and legal framework, education systems, financial and non-financial support structures, networking initiatives, new social enterprise markets in the region.

The document consists of two parts:

1

THE STUDY that provides relevant data on the state of play of social and youth entrepreneurship in the region and lessons learnt from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia;

2

GUIDELINES for social entrepreneurship ecosystem, CSOs and policy-makers describing the needs and competencies for youth social entrepreneurship and recommendations for action based on lessons learnt from the study.

Some of the most significant findings from both parts are the following:



2/3 of the Western Balkan governments haven't adopted an official definition of social entrepreneurship, as well as the specific legislation on social enterprises;



None of the Western Balkan six has specific legal form for social enterprises; they mostly operate using a legal form of association, cooperative or limited liability company;



In each of the WB6 there are at least three national stakeholders which have designed and are implementing specific support programs for young and/or social entrepreneurs. The private support structures and programs are still fragile and non-sustainable without the financial support of third parties;



Across the region, entrepreneurship is introduced in primary and secondary education programs, and in some cases, also in tertiary education. On the other hand, those curricula miss the goal of development of the entrepreneurial mindset and to focus on the practice of the skills;



Funding opportunities are mostly in the form of grants and seed investments; even if networks of business angels and other private investors are active in entrepreneurship development in some of the Western Balkan six, there are no solid programs or examples of social enterprise private investments;



In most of the cases, the general public doesn't understand the concept of social entrepreneurship and there are no strategic and specific awareness-raising programs or actions;



Young entrepreneurs are motivated by the sense of freedom and independence and opportunity to make a change, to learn and gain valuable work experience.



Numerous successful social enterprises can be presented as role models in the regional ecosystem.