

## The desirability of social entrepreneurship in the formation of social workers. entrepreneurs and social workers - agents of change

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**Abstract.** *This article is an overview of the implications that social entrepreneurship practices have on optimizing the work of social workers. The paper tries to highlight the need to develop new skills useful in the development of the social work profession, but also in the development of the whole society.*

*Starting from the study of the specialized literature, several objectives have been outlined which guided this research: identifying the difficulties faced by non-profit organizations in Cluj County, determining the level of knowledge about the term of social entrepreneurship and its specific activities, describing the specific activities of social entrepreneurship and analyze them on several dimensions specific to social entrepreneurship, identifying the skills and qualities of a social entrepreneur as an agent of social change.*

*These objectives were achieved through an exploratory qualitative research. Data analysis revealed that social business and entrepreneurial initiatives are different from one organization to another, some nonprofit organizations sell handmade products at sales exhibitions, other organizations develop their own self-financing and fundraising mechanisms and other organizations lay the foundations of social enterprises, which aim at the socio-professional integration of their own beneficiaries of social services.*

**Keywords:** social entrepreneurship, hybrid activities, social entrepreneur profile, social worker, entrepreneurial abilities, entrepreneurial skills.

**JEL codes:** L31, O35

### 1. Introduction

Non-governmental organizations providing social services operate in a highly competitive environment, characterized by ever increasing their target communities. The funding is limited, with a mounting competition for donors and subsidies (Weerawardena & Mort, 2006). In order to be able to earn steady income, so that they might carry out the specific activities that meet the needs of the serviced population, innovation becomes a sine qua non condition of non-profit organizations.

Adopting long-term entrepreneurial strategies would be a possible way of reducing dependence on external sources of finance. They ensure continuity of social programs and services, by harnessing the workforce of people in vulnerable groups. The development of hybrid activities in which both the social dimension and the economic dimension are addressed can effectively contribute to the expansion of social services and projects with the aim of fulfilling the social mission of the organization for a long time, but also in order to capitalize the potential of population categories that are exposed to social marginalization. In fact, we can talk about the growing-needs of the beneficiaries which generate the need for organizations to find

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new resources to respond optimally. In other words, the development of entrepreneurial skills in the social work provider is inherent.

## 2. Social entrepreneurship and social work

The concept of social entrepreneurship is debated in the literature by looking from different perspectives, in the form of several definitions.

Social entrepreneurship is essentially an innovative behaviour. This is the adaptation of the classical concept of "entrepreneurship" defined by P. Schumpeter in 1934. Starting from Schumpeter's classical conceptualization, two other researchers D. Young (1983,1997) and Ch. Badelt (1997) continued the research in this sense, such research that helped J. Defourny adapt the concept to social economy (Larionescu, 2013).

Social entrepreneurship is a topical subject. In a changing society that focuses on economic development and the correction of market and government failures to provide adequate redistribution mechanisms (War, 1982), social entrepreneurship addresses social issues in an innovative and sustainable way. In this context, social entrepreneurship is operationalized as the recognition, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities stemming from the basic and long-lasting needs of society, resulting in the creation and establishment of social values (Austin, Stevenson et al., 2006).

McPherson, executive director of the Canadian Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, states that social entrepreneurship is "combining the essence of business with that of the community through individual creativity" (Petrescu, 2013a).

Nicholls (2010b) sees social entrepreneurship as a new model that ensures social change and generates new opportunities for market development (Luke & Chu, 2013). Defourey also believes that we are witnessing the development of social entrepreneurship, following the classical patterns of entrepreneurship defined by Schumpeter (Larionescu, 2013).

It should not be ignored that social entrepreneurship consists in carrying out activities that involve the adoption of commercial methods in the private sector, combining both a social and an economic dimension. The finality of the steps is to develop local communities and to support social causes. All the efforts of social entrepreneurs have a sole purpose: to create social value for the entire community.

Synthesizing, social entrepreneurship must be understood as a "multidimensional and dynamic construct" (Vlăsceanu, 2010).

Next, when considering the very definition of social work assistance, whose major aim is to provide support to individuals, groups and communities "in order to increase and / or rebuild their capacity for social functioning and to obtain the resources to ensure their lives with dignity in the given social context" (Roth & Rebeleanu 2007), it is obvious that it is organized around the central concept of change, which is addressed in a planned manner (Ambrosino et al., 2008). The social worker becomes an agent of change. A similar goal has the social entrepreneur, whose work addresses social issues by identifying new opportunities and innovative solutions, focusing on creating social rather than financial value (Brouard&Larivet 2010). Consequently, the aims pursued by the social worker and the social entrepreneur, i.e. to generate social development and inclusion, overlap. Social workers need also to be concerned with the development of their entrepreneurial skills. If we take into account the profile of non-governmental organizations in Romania, we find a high number of them in the social field (FDSC, 2017). The quality of service providers is conditional on hiring the social worker in these organizations. Entrepreneurship in social work is an available and viable solution to increase professional satisfaction. It is a prerequisite for the realization of the purpose of social

work - the social inclusion of vulnerable persons (see Article 2 and Chapter IV, Section I, Law 292/2011 on social work reform corroborated with Article 5, Law 219/2015 on social economy).

### 3. Profile of the social entrepreneur

Social entrepreneurs are people who want to initiate change in society by adopting business-specific mechanisms in order to create social value. They engage in various activities to solve the identified social problems by developing projects with a long-term vision (Castillo, Ortiz, Del-Valle, 2015).

Social entrepreneurs create social value, being involved in a continuous process of innovation and capitalizing on new opportunities, placing first the benefit of society at the expense of their own benefit (Orhei, 2007). They are those social actors with ideas and talents that initiate activities devoted to a social mission, use innovative practices and create new ways of responding to social problems (Pepene, Alexiu, Kearns, Rus, Saad, Vețan, 2011, p. 8). The main feature of social entrepreneurs is to combine business and entrepreneurial skills with social objectives. Consequently, it concentrates their vision on activities that generate social value for the most disadvantaged segments of the community (Castillo et al., 2015).

Dees (1998b) declares social entrepreneurs to be reformers, revolutionaries and agents of change in the social sector. According to this, social entrepreneurs implement change in a systematic way, and through this change they gain sustainability (Dohrmann, Raith, Siebold, 2015). The essence of the social work process is, as we have already said, the change.

The motivation of social entrepreneurs is supported by the pressing social problems they identify and the desire to generate new solutions to solve problems (Grohs, Schneiders and Henze 2013).

Unlike purely economic entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship differs mainly through the following fundamental aspects: 1) entrepreneurial activity is explicitly guided by a social mission; 2) the measure of success is not achieved in the form of profit size, but in the form of social value created - from this point of view, social entrepreneurs act as agents of change in the social sector by: adopting a mission oriented towards creating and sustaining a social value, which is generally speaking, social development; identifying and exploiting new opportunities to accomplish their mission (where others see problems, entrepreneurs see opportunities); engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation and learning; working with confidence without being limited by the available resources, exploiting a wide range of resources, from pure philanthropy to business methods in the business sector; having a strong sense of responsibility towards the clients served and the results obtained (Dees and Economy 2001).

Austin, Stevenson and Wei-Skillern (2006) operationalize the gap between profit-oriented entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs by comparing the characteristics of the entrepreneurial activity of the two types of entrepreneurs and three variables: entrepreneurial attitude, mobilization of resources and performance measurement (Table 1):

Variable	Profit-oriented entrepreneurs	Social Entrepreneurs
Entrepreneurial attitude	Explore the opportunities offered by the market	Seek opportunities in identified social needs
Mobilizing resources	Have the ability to attract more easily human resources and have a more consistent financial capital	Innovative in attracting and using resources
Measuring its performance	Use economic indicators of measurement: turnover, profit	They can hardly measure the impact of their work, not always using profitability indicators. They seek to identify the social value created for their beneficiaries

**Table1. The differences between social and profit-oriented entrepreneurs**

(Source: Austin, Stevenson and Wei-Skillern 2006, adapted by the author)

We can say that there are well-defined differences between social and commercial entrepreneurs, each pursuing the satisfaction of different goals and objectives.

Synthesizing, social entrepreneurs are agents of change in the communities in which they live, promoting social innovation. They are the persons who recognize a problem and use the principles of entrepreneurship to organize, create and structure a business in order to initiate social change. Business deals with social well-being. They will seek to use their inspiration, creativity and courage to generate benefits for the target group (affected by marginalization, social exclusion, material deprivation) as well as for society in general. Entrepreneurs are innovative, oriented towards identifying opportunities, have/know where to look for resources, are valuable creators. In a constant search for opportunities for self-denial, entrepreneurs are a powerful engine for growth, having, through their work, a strong impact on their customers and their communities. Social entrepreneurs are the reformers of today's society, grounding their efforts on the essential component of social solidarity (Rebeleanu, 2013).

#### 4. Entrepreneurship skills and abilities

Studies in the field highlight the fact that it is important for a social entrepreneur to have certain entrepreneurial skills and abilities in order to be able to lay the foundation for change in the organization they are leading.

A pilot study conducted in Poland, on a target group of social entrepreneurs and social enterprise managers, concluded that 10 skills are essential for the development of social entrepreneurship: the ability to creatively use the available resources, the ability to evaluate the feasibility of a business plan, the ability to manage conflicts, the ability to communicate with customers and suppliers, and other third parties, the ability to identify with the purpose and activities of social economy, confidence in success even when challenges, the ability to manage administrative work, optimism, the ability to identify social problems, and the ability to lead and develop other people around (Wronka-Pośpiech, 2016). The study highlights the most important competence of a social entrepreneur: the ability to identify and use creatively various resources, but points out that the social entrepreneur must have knowledge in terms of creating a business plan and accurately assessing the feasibility of a project, analyzing in this regard the skills of the employed persons as well as the uncovered needs of clients to whom products or services are provided. Another important skill is to lead and contribute to the development of other people around. The manager is directly responsible for motivating and empowering people for whom he wants to create social value. Through the opportunities they create, social entrepreneurs contribute to the development of social capital and harness the potential of those marginalized people who can be important human resources for the whole of society (Wronka-Pośpiech, 2016).

Other research has highlighted that the skills and competencies of a social entrepreneur can be grouped into three broad categories: competencies and interpersonal skills and motivation of the work team, entrepreneurial skills and competences, managerial skills and abilities (Papp & Sepielak, 2008).

In addition to the skills and abilities identified by various authors, the studies presented in the literature highlight the intrinsic characteristics of the social entrepreneur. The following table summarizes the meta-analysis by Castillo, Ortiz, de-Valle (2015) on the intrinsic characteristics of social entrepreneurs.

<i>Researchers:</i>	<i>Characteristics identified:</i>
<i>Thomson, Alvy&amp; Lees (2000)</i>	High level of engagement Proof of force in the face of difficulties Ability to take risks The ability to generate trust and credibility

<i>Sullivan, Weerawardena&amp; Carnegie (2003)</i>	Creativity Proof of courage and force in the face of difficulties High level of engagement Ability to take risks
<i>Martin &amp;Osberg (2007)</i>	Sensitivity to phenomena such as exclusion and social marginalization.
<i>Koe&amp;Shamuganathan (2010)</i>	Kindness Opening up new ideas Self-exigency at work
<i>Jiao (2011)</i>	Charismatic High level of trust in the projects they develop.

**Table 2. Intrinsic characteristics of social entrepreneurs**  
 (Source: Castillo, Ortiz, Del-Valle, 2015, p.354)

## 5. Methodological approach

This research has attempted to highlight the need for non-profit organizations to develop entrepreneurial initiatives to deliver innovative, high quality and social value creation services. An attempt was made to capture the entrepreneurial dimension among non-profit organizations providing social services and identifying entrepreneurial skills of managers. The study was conducted in May-June 2017, at the Cluj County level. We opted for a qualitative approach in which knowledge is comprehensive and holistic. As a main method of data collection the interview was used, based on a semi-structured interview guide. The thematic units interacted with were the following: general information on the activity of the non-profit organization, general knowledge about social entrepreneurship, the attitude of managers on the development of social entrepreneurship in Romania, the benefits of social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial initiatives and social businesses, the capitalization of human resources, the obtaining and reinvestment of financial surplus, risk management, future perspectives in the field of social entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship profile. In order to understand the specifics of the organizations, we used secondary documents and analysis (act of incorporation, operating regulations, managerial tools used).

The research questions to which this article attempts to respond are as follows:

- How do managers of NGO's, operationalize the concept of social entrepreneurship?
- How do they relate to the idea of developing entrepreneurial initiatives and social businesses?
- What are the qualities and abilities that characterize the profile of the social entrepreneur?

The operational objectives retained for the research are:

- Identifying the difficulties faced by NGOs,
- Determining the degree of knowledge regarding the term of social entrepreneurship and its specific activities.
- Describing specific social / social business activities and analyzing them along several dimensions: entrepreneurial perspective, profit making and risk management.
- Identifying the skills and abilities of a social entrepreneur as an agent of social change and connection with social worker activities.

Ten people were interviewed, in terms of leadership or responsibilities in departments where organizations carry out social entrepreneurship activities. The highest duration of an interview was one and a half hours.

Concerning the profile of the organizations involved in research, the profile is the following: associations (5), foundations (1), social enterprises of insertion (2) and protected units (2). According to aims of activities, the NGOs provide services for people with physical and mental disabilities, ill people/oncologists, single mothers, and other vulnerable group members (Roma people, poor families).

## 6. Results and discussions

The study was descriptive. We used the thematic analysis of the data. The processing and analysis of the obtained data allowed the following thematic units and sub-themes to be outlined. These are presented in the following table:

Thematic units of analysis	Details of thematic aspects
<b>1. Difficulties encountered by foundations and associations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited financial resources</li> <li>• Self-sustainability reduced</li> <li>• Donation, partnership, and sponsorship dependency</li> </ul>
<b>2. General knowledge about social entrepreneurship</b>	<p>In nonprofit managers' replies there were found key elements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional entrepreneurship versus social entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Social value versus profit</li> <li>• Capitalization of the vulnerable group</li> <li>• Community action</li> <li>• Positive Social Poverty</li> <li>• Ethical character</li> <li>• Social capital</li> <li>• Self-sustainability</li> </ul>
<b>3. Managers' attitude regarding the development of social entrepreneurship in Romania</b>	<p><b>Difficulties:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislative and ambiguous legislation</li> <li>• Lack of working standards</li> <li>• Lack of managerial expertise</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge regarding the development of marketing strategies</li> </ul> <p><b>Role of NGOs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs - the promoter of social change</li> <li>• NGOs - responsible for meeting those needs not covered by the state or the private sector</li> </ul> <p><b>State action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state does not encourage the development of social entrepreneurship</li> <li>• The state does not provide viable public policies and fiscal facilities</li> <li>• Laws do not favor the development of social business</li> </ul>
<b>4. The benefits of Social Entrepreneurship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social and professional insertion of vulnerable persons into the labor market</li> <li>• Reduced passive benefits</li> <li>• Solving social problems</li> <li>• Raising the quality of life of disadvantaged people</li> <li>• Regenerating financial resources</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability of non-profit organizations</li> </ul>
<i>5. Entrepreneurial initiatives and social businesses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sale of handmade products</li> <li>• Social enterprises and protected units</li> <li>• Social / charitable stores</li> </ul>
<i>6. Valuing human resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational training and training</li> <li>• Psychological counseling and work mediation services</li> <li>• Additional facilities to support the employee at work</li> <li>• Driving style - Leadership</li> </ul>
<i>7. Acquisition and reinvestment of financial surplus</i>	<p><b>Entrepreneurs who obtained financial surplus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinvestment of the financial surplus in the purchase of raw materials</li> <li>• Ensuring the services of a larger number of beneficiaries</li> <li>• Improving service quality</li> <li>• Managing the non-profit organization</li> <li>• Sustainability of the social enterprise</li> </ul> <p><b>Entrepreneurs who do not receive a financial surplus are the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of people employed</li> <li>• Constant income for disadvantaged people</li> <li>• Avoiding deeper social issues</li> </ul>
<i>8. Risk management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realistic forecast of the conditions for success and risks.</li> <li>• Implications of the vulnerability condition</li> <li>• Adaptability to environmental constraints and available resources</li> </ul>
<i>9. Perspectives of the future in the sphere of social entrepreneurship</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiatives to open some graphics personalization centers</li> <li>• Covering niches not covered by other private sector services / businesses</li> </ul>
<i>10. Social Entrepreneurship Profile - Entrepreneurial Skills and Innovative Skills</i>	<p><b>The social entrepreneur must be:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovative, intuitive</li> <li>• Persevering</li> <li>• Open to learning</li> <li>• Organized</li> <li>• Energetic</li> <li>• Persuasive</li> <li>• Brave</li> <li>• Correct</li> <li>• Empathic</li> </ul> <p><b>The social entrepreneur must have:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurial skills and abilities</li> <li>• Skills and managerial expertise</li> <li>• Communication skills, conflict mediation, motivation of the team</li> </ul>

**Table 3. Analysis of interviews on the development of social entrepreneurship and social businesses activities (table based on own research)**

Further, some of the most important aspects outlined by analytical approach will be addressed: general knowledge about social entrepreneurship and attitudes towards the concept, managers' attitude towards the development of social entrepreneurship in Romania, benefits of developing social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial initiatives developed by organizations, reflections on the acquisition and reinvestment of the financial surplus, future perspectives in the sphere of the development of social entrepreneurship on the uncovered niches by other services and the realization of a profile of the social entrepreneur from the perspective of the respondents.

This research has highlighted the fact that social businesses and entrepreneurial initiatives are diverse from one organization to another. Some non-governmental organizations sell handmade products at sales exhibitions (5), others develop their own self-financing and fundraising mechanisms (2). Some organizations form the basis of social enterprises, which aim at the social and professional integration of their own beneficiaries of social services (2). There are also organizations that combine several strategies to raise funds (1). All these activities are associated with the term of social entrepreneurship, the social dimension being merged with the economic dimension, aiming at satisfying the social mission of the organization and not gaining a profit.

We present some of the responses of social organization managers who promote and support social work principles but who have knowledge of the term social entrepreneurship:

"When I hear the phrase social entrepreneurship, I'm thinking of a business that is not meant to profit, but a business that involves primarily responsibility for people where people matter, ethically and positively social. However, social entrepreneurship is at the beginning. Organizations have so far pursued social economy activities by offering social services, but to be able to talk about entrepreneurship, they have to change their approaches, become more pragmatic, form managers that also respond to economic demands"(F.P., NGO manager providing services for people with disabilities).

A.M. (NGO manager providing services to young people with mental disabilities), referring to the utility of social entrepreneurship, mentions that social entrepreneurship ensures the sustainability of their own services, but at the same time acts in the community's favor to solve those urgent problems that remain uncovered by the state or by the private sector: *"When I hear this term, I think of a business that helps me finance my social services, thus solving some of the social problems of the community"*.

Managers surveyed are aware of the difficulties they face and become more innovative in terms of fundraising to ensure the sustainability of their own social projects. They know the concept of social entrepreneurship and identify the elements around which its definitions are built. However, it considers that national legislation is vague and unclear, and this does not encourage the development of social entrepreneurship. Their fears are related to the fact that there are no clear regulations to guide the development of their own social businesses and profit-oriented competition.

*"The development of social entrepreneurship in Romania is still in its infancy. Legislation in the field has a lot of gaps and no enforcement procedures. It is trying to develop social entrepreneurship without being clearly defined and without working standards"* (A.I., Social Entrepreneurship Manager).

*"Social entrepreneurship is not supported at all, there are no viable public policies and no tax incentives to encourage and support social entrepreneurship. From my point of view, it is not hard to create a social enterprise, it is hard to keep it"*(A.M., NGO manager providing services to young people with mental disabilities).

However, managers are aware of the potential benefits of social entrepreneurship. Some of them even have social businesses like social insertion companies (printing houses, bakeries, carpentry, tailoring workshops, and social shops). Other managers are more involved in entrepreneurial initiatives such as

making handmade products or offering services against payment (cleaning services, landscaping and maintenance services, etc.)

*"The main benefit in the development of a social business is the integration of vulnerable people into the labor market and their transition from the social workers and the beneficiaries of state subsidies to active people on the labor market"* (A.I., Social Entrepreneurship Manager).

*"Social entrepreneurship solves some of the social problems of the community, creates a positive social impact in the community, exploits the potential of a disadvantaged and marginalized social category, increases the quality of life of the underprivileged people and brings added value to the community"* (A.M., manager NGO providing services for people with mental disabilities).

Another topic of discussion was related to the creation and redistribution of earnings through various activities. The research has highlighted the following: many times there is no profit from these businesses, the only gain is to ensure the socio-professional insertion of beneficiaries and a stable income that prevents them from damaging their lives or other social problems. Those managers who have obtained a financial surplus have reinvested the money in the organization's activities and the development of social projects:

*"Everything we can raise through sale of products made by us investing in new materials, the equipment that we can improve services and thus the quality of life of our people"* (F.P., manager NGO that provides services for people with disabilities).

*"All the money from the sales are reinvested in products or raw materials or in operations of the Day Center"*(A.M., manager NGO providing services for young people with mental disabilities).

In the case of social enterprises, more emphasis is placed on avoiding losses and ensuring steady income for employees.

*"In general, business or social entrepreneurship, in addition to having employees from the vulnerable group, provides social projects in the community, and profit should be reinvested .... I mean, we have not succeeded in gaining profits in our social economy structures. If we had income = expenditure and we were on zero profit, it was good for us, at least we offered stable jobs to our beneficiaries"* (A.I., Social Entrepreneurship Manager)

*"We cannot talk about profit, there is no such thing in a social business. The only gain is that we created jobs for the people who were most in need, and thus have a steady income"* (M.A., Protected Unit Manager - services for people with disabilities).

Although social entrepreneurs may face difficulties in setting up a social enterprise, keeping employees at work, ensuring steady productivity or gaining profit, they feel they need to be flexible and courageous and creative to use the resources available in - as innovative as possible, in order to create social value for the beneficiaries and for the whole society.

*"I, as an entrepreneur, would look for those uncovered needs, those niches that the services of the protected unit would do better than other services on the market. Depending on the needs identified, I would guide my services to provide as many jobs as possible"*(M.A., Protected Unit Manager - Services for People with Disabilities).

*"Private organizations / companies have innovative initiatives because they are motivated to use all available legal, human and material resources to achieve the intended goal. We use this opportunity to promote and diversify our services, to adapt the workplace to the needs of vulnerable employees, to coordinate assisted work of people with disabilities, to develop the social business itself that sustains the work of the social enterprise. Our work differs according to the type of work organization; static team, mobile team, placement team. The organization of the teams comes from the need to work vulnerable people, their ability to perform an activity, their ability to provide a type of work, on a qualitative level. Social businesses have evolved from the need for vulnerable people to be discriminated against and excluded from*

*the labor market. The development of services is due to the need to create work adapted to people with disabilities, but not only. Sales of services are possible due to the needs of institutions that can identify their needs and use the available financial resources to cover them". (A.C., manager social enterprise that works with single mothers).*

It is confirmed that managers of non-profit organizations need to be flexible and open to new ideas on social investment. Good social entrepreneurs are distinguished from other entrepreneurs, through their ability to creatively manage the resources available, but also face difficulties with courage and strength.

Bornstein (2004) defines social entrepreneurs as people with new ideas who want to address major issues, and they keep their own visions tireless. Social entrepreneurs will not give up until they are heard (Dacin, Dacin&Matear, 2010, p.39). Starting from this characterization, we outlined the social entrepreneurship profile through the responses received from the interviewees. In the opinion of the participants in this research, innovation, vision and perseverance are inherent to a social entrepreneur. However, they did not ignore the importance of the practical and managerial skills that an authentic social entrepreneur must have:

*"Be innovative, organized, energetic, open to lifelong learning, good communicator, and, if possible ... persuasive" (F.P., manager NGO that provides services for people with disabilities).*

*"I believe that a social entrepreneur needs to be persistent and determined in what he does" (E.I., NGO manager offering services for people with disabilities).*

*"Fairness, empathy, vision, initiative, professionalism, managerial skills, and never forget why he set up the social business" (A.M., NGO manager offering services for young people with mental disabilities).*

*"In addition to the skills and management skills that are absolutely necessary, the entrepreneur needs to know the business and the products / services they sell to provide continuous training at the workplace. Also to be developed communication and relationship skills, be empathetic to the situation of employees" (A.I, business manager for social integration).*

*"First of all it takes courage, then intuition and insistence. Also, a good social entrepreneur must be communicative, respect his collaborator" (D.H., Protected Unit Manager offering services for people with disabilities).*

## **7. Conclusions**

In this research we have tried to outline an overview of the competencies and abilities needed by the social worker who wants to create social value by developing specific activities for social entrepreneurship. This desideratum is absolutely necessary if we consider the utility and benefits of social entrepreneurship, but also the need to adapt the social worker to the urgent problems of society.

Among the benefits of social entrepreneurship in the sustainability of the activity of nongovernmental organizations providing social work services some are revealed. It accepts the necessity and desirability of obtaining income through its own forces, which contributes to decreasing the dependence on governmental and / or philanthropic resources. Entrepreneurial behavior is also materialized in the opportunity of analyzing each program of the organization from the perspective of the mission and the capacity to generate its own sources of financing.

The analytical approach indicates that social entrepreneurs are appreciated as people with new ideas and a strong vision that want to address and deal with major issues: financial sustainability to provide services appropriate to needs in order to increase the number of beneficiaries, but also to be effective in the process of social inclusion pursued through their activities (integration of vulnerable people on the labor market, acquiring independent living skills, etc.). Their most important competence, in the opinion of the respondents, is the ability to identify and use creatively various resources. Social entrepreneurs are

characterized by the following words: innovators, intuitive, persevering, and open to learning, organized, energetic, persuasive, courageous, correct and empathetic.

These considerations can also be applied to social workers who, while respecting the values and principles of the profession, have a moral obligation to help and solve customer problems using all the resources available in a creative way. Therefore, social entrepreneurs and social workers are important social actors of change, which can contribute to the wellbeing of the society at large.

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