



# **Social Enterprise in a Global Context: The Role of Higher Education Institutions**

## **Country Brief: Slovenia**

**August 2016**



**INSIGHT  
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UNIVERSITY**

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## About the British Council

The British Council was founded to create a friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and the wider world. The British Council creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and builds trust between them worldwide. We call this work cultural relations.

We work in over 100 countries, connecting millions of people with the United Kingdom through programmes and services in the English language, the Arts, Education and Society. We believe these are the most effective means of engaging with others, and we have been doing this work since 1934.

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## About Plymouth University

Plymouth University is one of the leading modern universities in the UK, ranked in the top seven institutions under the age of fifty by Times Higher Education. The University was awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education in 2012, and was the first in the world to be awarded the Social Enterprise Mark in recognition of working as a genuine social enterprise, caring for communities, and protecting the planet. The study has been led by SERIO, an applied research unit based at Plymouth University, in collaboration with colleagues from the Institution's Futures Entrepreneurship Centre.

## Using this report

### Overview

This research seeks to identify the benefits and challenges of partnership between higher education institutions (HEIs) and social enterprises (SEs) with a particular focus on those operating within an international context. Specifically it explores:

- Existing partnerships between HEIs and social enterprise across twelve countries, spanning four continents;
- The benefits of existing cooperation between social enterprise and HEIs;
- The impact of such cooperation on a range of stakeholder groups, such as students, social entrepreneurs, and funders; and,
- The role of HEIs in supporting an increased awareness of social entrepreneurship as a career option, and in assisting start-ups and early growth.

In May 2016, the British Council published the core research report<sup>1</sup> emanating from this study - '*Social Enterprise in a Global Context: The Role of Higher Education Institutions*' – which placed a deliberate focus on the macro international landscape for engagement between HEIs and social enterprise. In contrast, this report on Slovenia provides a specific country focus, enabling a more granular view of social enterprise activity among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). A similar report has been produced for each of the eleven other countries that participated in this study.

It is expected that the findings of this research will:

- Facilitate dialogue, networking and knowledge exchange, opening up avenues for greater international cooperation between HEIs, and a stronger global narrative on social value and the contribution of this activity to achieving social development goals.
- Assess and promote the role of HEIs in social enterprises and the benefits of existing co-operation, based upon an analysis of opportunities and challenges related to collaboration.
- Provide a body of evidence which supports and informs further research and collaboration opportunities.

All research outputs from this study, including this report, will be made available on the British Council Social Enterprise webpage: [www.britishcouncil.org/society/social-enterprise/reports](http://www.britishcouncil.org/society/social-enterprise/reports)

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<sup>1</sup> Referred to hereon after as 'the global research report'.

## Introduction

### Outlining the research

This research is set against a context of global growth in higher education, and seeks to understand and enhance the role of international cooperation between higher education institutions (HEIs) and social enterprises (SEs). The study, led by Plymouth University for the British Council, is one of the first to attempt to identify the range of HEI activity in the social enterprise sector. Specifically, the study maps and explores existing partnerships between HEIs and SE; the benefits of existing cooperation; and the impact of such cooperation on a range of stakeholder groups, such as students, social entrepreneurs, and funders.

One of the challenges of conducting social enterprise research on a global level is that the term is governed by different legal frameworks, terminology, and cultural approaches. For this study, the researchers adopted the [www.socialenterprise.org.uk](http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk) definition, which considers a social enterprise to be:

*“A business that trades to tackle social problems, improve communities, people’s life chances, or the environment. They make their money from selling goods and services in the open market, but they reinvest their profits back into the business or the local community”*

### Study approach

The global research was undertaken with over two hundred HEIs drawn from Canada, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, Slovenia, South Africa, Thailand, United Kingdom and the USA. These twelve countries were selected to provide a wide range of different geographical locations, higher education structures, and levels of economic development and rates of growth. The study comprised three core methodological stages:

Approach	Overview
<b>Desk-based review of social enterprise activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This included academic and grey literature, as well as media sources such as HEI and news websites, blogs, and third party partner organisation websites.</li> <li>▪ The review was supported by consultations with British Council representatives from each country and explored country-specific issues such as variations in the definition of social enterprise, legal structures for the sector, and challenges to growth.</li> </ul>
<b>HEI survey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An online survey was sent to all known HEIs in each country to map social enterprise activity, and to explore the benefits and challenges of partnership working.</li> <li>▪ The survey was disseminated to 993 HEIs, yielding a return of 205 (a 21% response rate).</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In-depth semi-structured interviews with up to three HEIs from each country, to capture their social enterprise activity and partnerships in more detail.</li> <li>▪ This data was combined with analysis from the preceding two stages to formulate a series of case studies of practice.</li> </ul>

With specific regard to Slovenia, twenty-six HEIs were invited to complete a survey, yielding a return of six – a response of 23%. Where possible, the survey was targeted toward named contacts with knowledge of, or responsibility for social enterprise at their institution. Whilst this approach was felt to provide the most rounded view of cross-institutional engagement and practice, it should be noted that any views expressed may not necessarily reflect the official stance of their HEI.

The survey findings have been exemplified and elaborated upon through the inclusion of case studies of practice from three Slovenian HEIs, and consultation with representatives from the British Council team in Slovenia.

### **The British Council's social enterprise programme**

Social enterprises address social and environmental problems through innovative solutions that improve people's lives in our communities and societies. The British Council's global social enterprise programme draws on the UK experience in social enterprise to promote its growth around the world. We build capacity in the sector, forge international networks, and support policy leaders to create ecosystems in which social enterprise and social investment can thrive. Our work supports positive social change, inclusive growth and sustainable development while building trust and creating opportunities between the UK and other countries.

## The landscape for social enterprise

### Country overview

Higher education in Slovenia is relatively longstanding – the first faculties in Theology and Philosophy were established in 1773.<sup>2</sup> Despite this, the first formal HEI was only established in 1919 and this remained the sum of Slovenia's higher education system up until the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> Presently, there are approximately 26 HEIs in Slovenia, and in 2013 there were just under 100,000 student enrolments, representing around 4.7% of the country's total population.<sup>4</sup> This is higher than the 3.6% mean average number of student enrolments as a proportion of the total population found across all 12 study countries reported in this research.

Although the term 'social enterprise' does have resonance in Slovenia, the terminology used to define the sector can vary. The phrases 'socially responsible enterprise' or 'enterprise with a social impact' are also used by some stakeholders in place of the social enterprise label. Consultations with in-country representatives suggest that a reluctance to use the SE term may be due in part to the negative connotations associated with the word "social" when considered in relation to the organisational structure existing under past socialist regimes in countries such as Slovenia.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, it is understood that the 'social enterprise' term still has mainstream appeal on the whole.

### Approaches to social enterprise

Social enterprise is a new concept in Slovenia, and was rarely observed prior to 2009. The 2011 Social Entrepreneurship Act was the first form of legal definition and structure given to social enterprise in Slovenia. However, registration is voluntary, comes with no financial advantage and the Act has been criticised for being too strict and restrictive. This has limited the numbers of enterprises fitting the registration criteria and so the number of registered enterprises may not be a true or accurate reflection of the actual number currently in operation across Slovenia.

Feedback from the consultations conducted in support of this study suggest that social enterprises in Slovenia most commonly have a work-integration purpose, having become a useful tool to provide employment opportunities following the 2008 economic crisis. Beyond work integration, the promotion of social inclusion for vulnerable people is another social purpose that social enterprises in Slovenia are commonly addressing.

### Support for social enterprise

The Slovenian government has outlined 10 strategic projects of national importance, one of which concerns the growth and development of the social enterprise sector. As part of this national agenda, the government are seeking to make it easier for different entities to register as social enterprise and access funding and support streams.

The Slovenian Forum of Social Entrepreneurship is the main national network for the sector. As an independent, non-governmental, non-political institution, the forum is a membership body for social enterprises comprising any organisational structure; working to promote and support the development of the sector in Slovenia. They achieve this through various means, including delivering training, workshops and financial advice for social enterprises; conducting international

<sup>2</sup> Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes (2011) Higher Education in Slovenia.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Education and Sport (1998) Development of Higher Education in Slovenia. Available at: <http://www.international.ac.uk/media/6581/development%20of%20higher%20education%20-%20slovenia.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2016). Enrolment by level of education. Available at: [http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=EDULIT\\_DS](http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=EDULIT_DS)

<sup>5</sup> European Commission (2014) A map of Social enterprises and their eco-systems in Europe.

social enterprise partnerships and raising the profile of social enterprises through publications, projects and events.

In addition, third sector organisations tend to be the primary source of funding and support for social enterprises in Slovenia. Fund 05, Foundation for Social Investments is one such body; a private financial institution established in 2012 with the sole aim of financing social entrepreneurship and social innovation endeavours across the country. Similarly, Social Innovators of the Future is a social enterprise incubator; providing new start-ups in Slovenia with a variety of business support resources and services to accelerate their successful development.

### **The role of HEIs**

Currently, HE support for the social enterprise sector in Slovenia is small-scale but emerging. Several HEIs engage in social enterprise research and others are incorporating the concept within the taught academic curriculum. In addition, attempts are being made to encourage students to consider social entrepreneurship as a career path. For example, the University of Ljubljana (UL) run the Social Incubator, which was founded in 2010 by the student organisation of UL. This incubator provides start-up support for student-led social enterprises; offering various services including co-working office space, start-up capital, workshops and promotion activities.

Other HEIs are also supporting the sector by engaging in networking, knowledge sharing and mutual learning initiatives. For example, the Yunus Centre for Social Business, based at the University of Maribor, offers workshops and advice sessions to support social entrepreneurs to develop their ideas and network with others. Similarly, institutions such as the University of Primorska and University of Nova Gorica are engaging in research projects, generating academic publications and taking part in national events and forums to promote better understanding about the sector.

## Overview of social enterprise activity

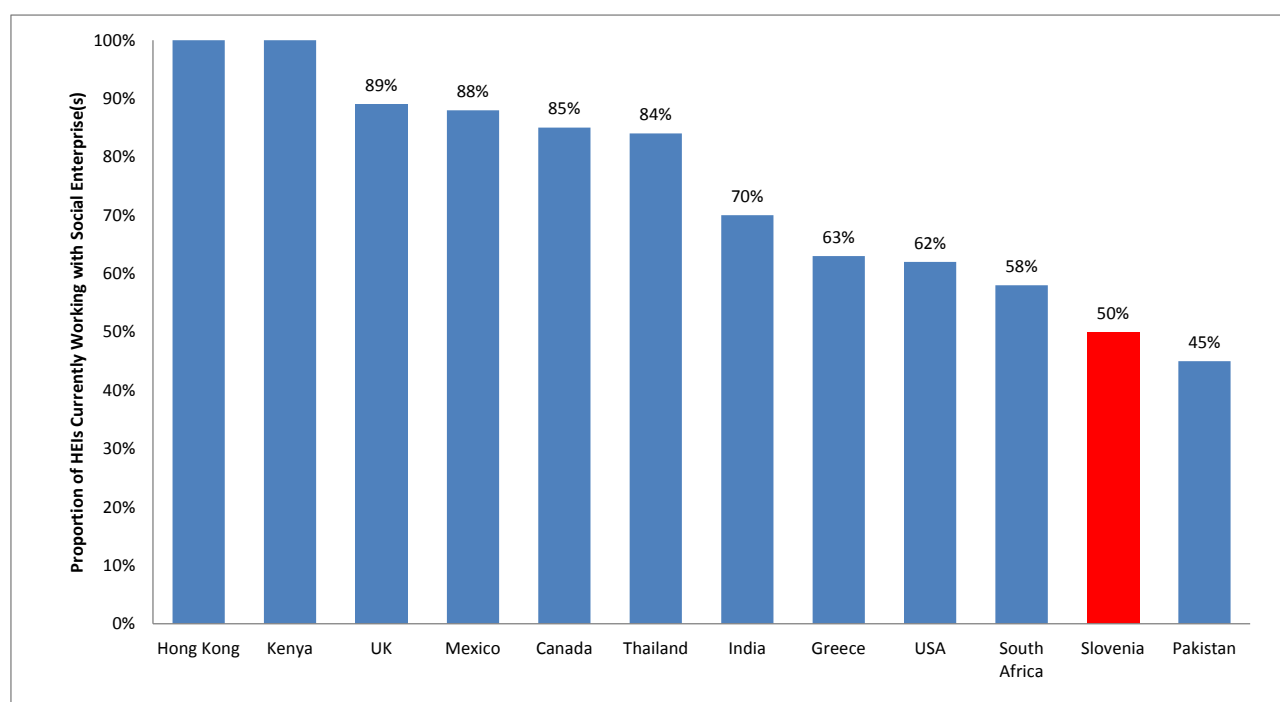
### Introduction

This section firstly summarises the scale and characteristics of HEI and SE partnerships in Slovenia, followed by a review of priority areas, and discussion on the benefits and approaches to supporting social enterprise. Where appropriate, the analysis draws on findings from the eleven other countries of focus in order to provide a comparator position to Slovenia (see 'Using this report').

### The scale of social enterprise activity

As illustrated in Chart 1, although the social enterprise sector is currently emerging in Slovenia, and as such is relatively new in comparison to the other study countries involved in this research, the survey yielded a total of six responses from Slovenian HEIs; three of which had active partnerships (50%); two had previously engaged with social enterprise (33%); and one stated an intention to engage in the future (17%).

**Chart 1: Proportion of institutions from each country currently working with social enterprises**



Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016  
Base: 205

Analysis revealed no obvious trend with regard to the number of active partnerships across responding HEIs; of the Slovenian HEIs that were working with a social enterprise at the point of the survey, one was engaged with between one and five, whilst one had between six and ten active partnerships. The remaining HEI was unable to provide an estimation of partnerships.

### International activity

In terms of the geographical scope of engagement, of the five Slovenian HEIs with either an active or previous partnership(s) at the time of the survey, all stated that this included a partnership within their own country. Furthermore, three stated that their partnerships also involved international



activity, which typically took the form of student exchange opportunities; working with social enterprises in other countries; and conducting international research with social enterprises. This is in line with evidence from our consultations with in-country representatives who suggest that various Slovenian institutions are engaging with international partners from across Europe; increasing their understanding about approaches to social enterprise and how best to support the development of the sector in Slovenia.

*“Our work with social enterprises internationally includes common development of specialised, one year postgraduate study programmes”*

*“Our international work involves cross-border cooperation, developing cooperatives”*

*“We have conducted research concerning European practices and policies in the social enterprise sector, with a particular focus on Slovenia”*

Regarding the scale of this international activity, all three HEIs that work (or had previously worked) with international SE partnerships stated that this amounted to between one and five projects. Further, as a proportion of total work with social enterprise, two of the three HEIs stated that international partnerships accounted for approximately five per cent, however the remaining HEI was unable to attribute a proportion.

With regard to the key motivations for working internationally, one Slovenian institution focused on how such practices are built into the HEI mission, and another highlighted that engaging with social enterprises on an international scale allowed for greater funding prospects. However, one institution also underlined how finding the expertise necessary for successful international collaborations posed as a challenge in this respect.

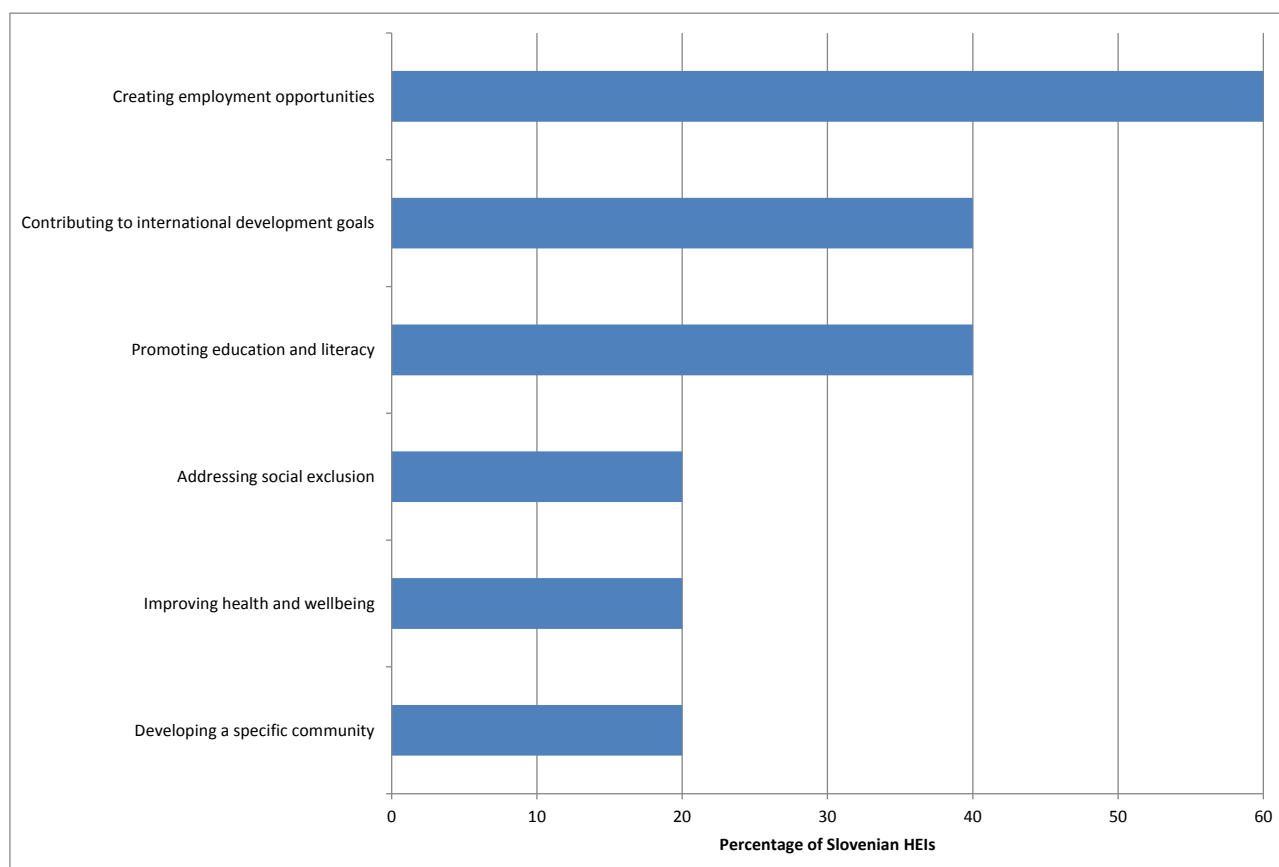
*“It is part of our institution’s mission to work with social enterprise internationally”*

*“We are motivated to work with international partners because of the funding opportunities for our projects”*

## Priority areas

Somewhat echoing the findings from the global report, the most commonly cited social purposes that Slovenian HEIs would be most likely to support<sup>6</sup> were the creation of employment opportunities, reported by three institutions; contributions to international development goals (2); and the promotion of education and literacy (2). As shown in Chart 2, addressing social exclusion, improving health and wellbeing, and developing specific communities were also deemed to be important social purposes, each cited by one HEI.

<sup>6</sup> HEIs nominating each variable as their first or second choice of purpose they would be most likely to support.

**Chart 2: Types of social enterprise Slovenian HEIs would be most likely to support**

Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016

Base: 5

### Motivations for engagement

Slovenian HEIs outlined a range of motivating factors that underpinned their engagement with social enterprises. Somewhat focusing on the advantages of social enterprise partnerships for their own institution, two HEIs reported that they would be particularly motivated<sup>7</sup> to engage with social enterprise to both generate income and develop research opportunities. Additional motivations which centred on benefits for the HEI itself, included: accessing funding, developing services and products, and improving the student experience, all of which were cited by one institution. Slovenian HEIs also stated a motivation to work with social enterprise if it was part of their mission or strategy; if it was part of the curriculum on some of its courses; and to address national needs, each of which were cited by one institution.

### Working with and supporting social enterprise

Slovenian HEIs that were found to be currently working with a social enterprise(s) were asked to indicate the ways in which this took place, and to exemplify the associated type of support they provide.

As shown in Table 1, (and in common with the findings from the global report), the two most commonly cited approaches were through a project, partnership, or joint activity, and through institutional commitment to working with and/or supporting social enterprise in the HEI's mission or strategy— each of which were identified by all three responding Slovenian institutions. This was exemplified by the provision of: expertise, collaboration or research opportunities, and training (3

<sup>7</sup> HEIs nominating each variable as their first or second most motivating factor.

HEIs); and placement students, access to facilities, and the promotion and/or purchasing of goods and services (2).

The second most commonly cited approach for support was through institutional membership of a social enterprise network, cited by two Slovenian HEIs. Notably, HEIs in Slovenia reported comparably lower levels of student and HEI/Staff-led social enterprises, and incubation facilities than those found globally, all of which were cited by just one institution, compared to 78%, 67%, and 68% respectively on a global scale.

**Table 1: Approaches to working with social enterprise<sup>8</sup>**

Approach	Percentage	
	Slovenia	Global
A project, partnership or other joint activity with one or more social enterprise(s)	100%	96%
Institutional commitment to working with/ supporting social enterprises in mission/ strategy	100%	81%
Institutional membership of a social enterprise network	67%	70%
HEI/ Staff-led social enterprises	33%	67%
Student led social enterprises	33%	78%
Incubation space/ facility where new social enterprise(s) can develop	33%	68%

Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016

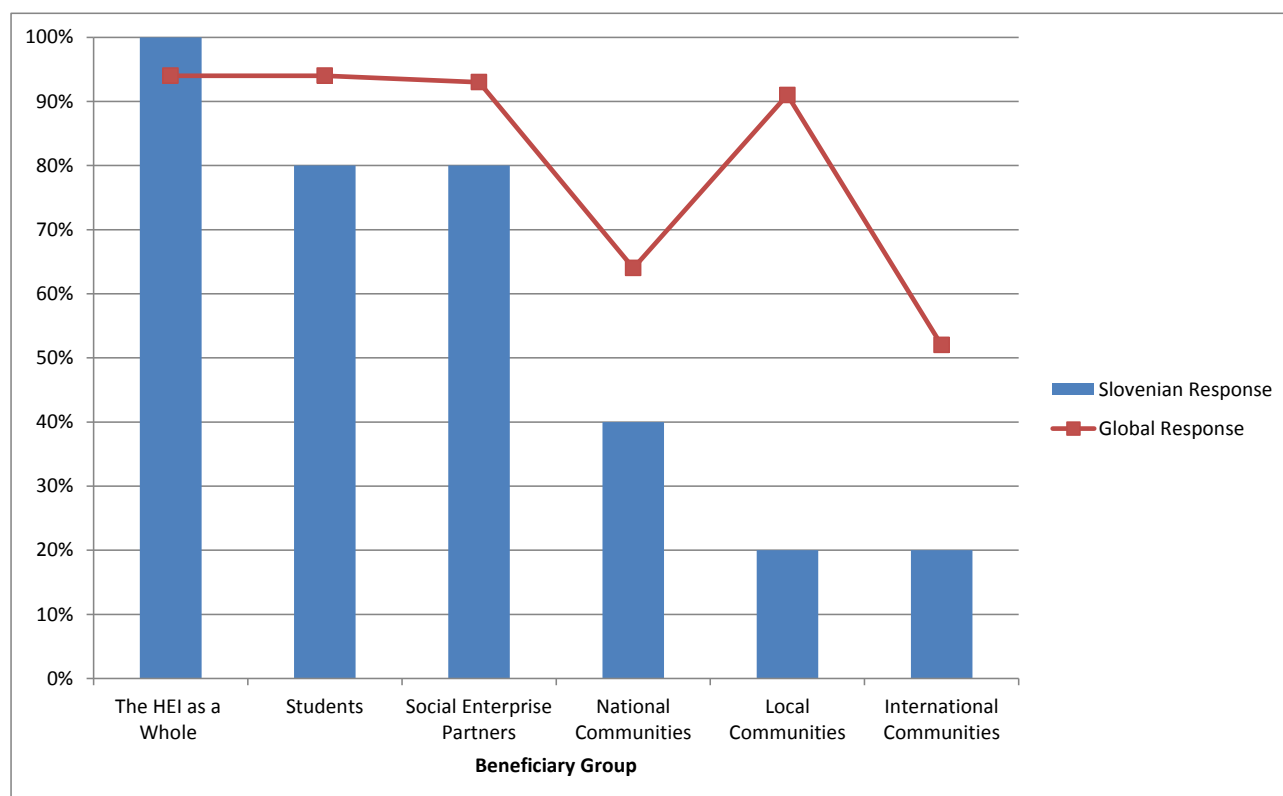
Base: 3

### Benefits of partnership working

Slovenian HEIs identified that their work with social enterprise(s) had created benefits for a range of groups. This is presented in Chart 3, and benchmarked against findings from the global report, indicated by the red trend line.

Perceived levels of benefit amongst Slovenian HEIs partially echoed the collective view across all twelve countries. As shown, the primary beneficiaries of partnership working were identified by Slovenian institutions to be the HEI as a whole (cited by 5 HEIs), and students and social enterprise partners, (both cited by 4). This is broadly in line with global findings of 94%, 94%, and 93% respectively. In contrast, however, there was much less recognition regarding the benefit to local communities – identified by only one institution in Slovenia, in comparison to 93% globally; or international communities – also identified by only one institution in Slovenia, compared to 52% globally. This may be because the social enterprise sector in Slovenia is currently emerging and relatively small-scale compared to its European counterparts; so it may be considered that the tangible benefits to society are still relatively minor.

<sup>8</sup> N.B. Percentages have been provided so that a global comparison can be made, however caution should be exercised when interpreting this data because of the small sample from Slovenia.

**Chart 3: Slovenian views regarding the key beneficiaries of HEI/SE partnership**

Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016

Slovenia Base: 5

Global Base: 157, except 'Social Enterprise Partners' where B=156; 'Students' and 'Local Communities' where B=155; and 'National Communities' and 'International Communities' where B=148

### Embedding social enterprise in higher education

Reflecting findings from the eleven other participating countries, Slovenian HEIs that had active partnerships at the point of the survey commonly embedded social enterprise within their higher education system in a number of different ways. Specifically, all three HEIs involved social enterprise in the delivery of their curriculum; two used social enterprise to support the delivery of extracurricular activities; two reported that they offered accredited social enterprise courses; and two incorporated social enterprise across all courses.

## Good practice in developing partnerships

### Introduction

As noted previously, the research sought, in part, to facilitate dialogue and knowledge exchange, and to inform further collaboration opportunities (see *'Using this report'*). In support of these objectives, the survey asked HEIs to share examples of good practice stemming from their experience of developing partnerships with social enterprises.

HEIs in Slovenia provided a range of good practice approaches that could be shared more widely, which were broadly categorised as follows: communication and knowledge exchange; developing networks; and awareness of cultural differences. These are discussed in turn, and exemplified by quotes from responding institutions.

### Communication and knowledge exchange

In Slovenia, the survey highlighted the importance of communication and openness in sharing information and knowledge in order to achieve a productive partnership of real value. However, the emphasis was placed on the HEI to spend time understanding the complexities under which individual social enterprises operate and the issues they aim to address before embarking on any partnership activity.

*"First, the HEI must gain insight of the social enterprise system on a national, regional, and/or local level; acquiring knowledge about the particular challenges that they face. Only after gaining this information should work begin with social enterprises"*

*"Try to think about what they need and listen to them rather than projecting your aspirations onto them"*

*"There is enormous diversity between social enterprises. Try to do your homework and get as much information as possible"*

### Developing cooperative networks

The emphasis on developing multi-disciplinary networks, including organisations with various skills and expertise, was less evident in Slovenia than on a global scale. However the ability to share knowledge and experience, provide support and share resources through the development of social entrepreneur-focussed networks was highlighted; including activities such as coaching and mentoring among peers.

*"Our HEI has built a network of our start-ups to support new social enterprises as they enter into the development phase"*

*"We use coaching as a form of work with our students and start-ups to support them in creating their own solutions"*

*"The social enterprises we collaborated with mentored our students during their obligatory student practice"*

### **Awareness of cultural differences**

HEIs in Slovenia were among those that identified the need to be cognisant of cultural differences and the landscape within which social enterprises operate, when developing international partnerships. In particular HEIs stressed the importance of understanding the varying legal frameworks, terminology and cultural approaches to social enterprise at the outset, before implementing any partnership activities.

*“First get familiar with the social enterprise system in a particular country”*

## Summary

In Slovenia, the notion of social enterprise is still relatively new and so the sector itself is still emerging. There are individual organisations and support networks promoting the development of the sector; but a cohesive eco-system of support is still evolving. HEIs in Slovenia are beginning to emerge as a key source of support for the social enterprise sector, evidenced by three of the responding institutions currently being engaged in an active partnership (50%). This is benchmarked against a 75% level of active engagement from across all twelve study countries.

Regarding the geographical scope of engagement, all five institutions who had a partnership with SE (either currently or had previously), indicated that this included a partnership within their own country and three of these also stated that their partnership involved some element of international activity. Underpinning their engagement with SE was a motivation to generate income and develop research opportunities for the institution. Slovenian HEIs also suggested that they work with social enterprises to access funding, improve the student experience and to develop services and products. The most commonly cited social purposes that Slovenian HEIs would be most likely to support were those creating employment opportunities, contributing to international development goals, and/ or promoting education and literacy. This is in line with evidence that suggests work-integration enterprises are thought to characterise a substantial proportion of the social enterprise sector across Slovenia.

In terms of the ways in which Slovenian HEIs approach their work with social enterprise(s), all responding institutions reported that this was through an institutional commitment to working with SE and specifically through a project, partnership or joint venture, for example, through the provision of expertise, collaboration or research opportunities, or training. These approaches were in line with the global findings, however, Slovenian HEIs were less likely to report incubating new social enterprises or facilitating staff- or student-led ventures; suggesting that most of their partnerships are occurring with external social enterprises. The HEI as a whole, students and the social enterprise partners were identified by Slovenian HEIs to be the primary beneficiaries of partnership working, whilst local and international communities were less likely to be cited. This may be due to the relatively young status of the SE sector in Slovenia and highlights how HEIs may build on their current engagement with the sector.

Considering the future of HEI/ SE partnerships in Slovenia, and notwithstanding their current engagement, the findings have highlighted how institutions may now play a leading role in the expansion of the developing social enterprise sector. Whilst all Slovenian HEIs with an active partnership reported that they engage in a project or partnership with a social enterprise and involve them in the delivery of curriculum teaching; few indicated that staff-led, student-led or incubation facilities were currently part of their offering. Therefore, there exists many future opportunities for HEIs to lead on the development of new start-up social enterprises; contributing to the development of the sector whilst simultaneously creating opportunities for institutions themselves.

## Case studies of practice

### Case study: Ljubljana University

**Institution overview:**

Founded in 1919, the University of Ljubljana, 'UL' is the oldest and largest university in Slovenia. Located in Ljubljana, the university has more than 30,000 students currently enrolled. UL implements and promotes basic, applied and developmental research and is pursuing excellence and the highest quality as well as the highest ethical criteria in all scientific fields and art. In these areas of national identity, the University of Ljubljana specifically develops and promotes Slovenian scientific and professional terminology.

**Approach to social enterprise:**

The university is a member of a social enterprise network and they support student-led social enterprises, and projects or partnerships with existing social enterprises. Ljubljana offers an accredited social enterprise course for students; supports the development of new ventures in the university incubator; and involves social entrepreneurs in the delivery of both curriculum teaching and extracurricular activities.

**Collaboration:**

UL has built a network of social enterprises that support each other and new start-up enterprises once they have made it past their own start-up phase. Their approach centres on strong collaboration, drawing in partners at all stages, benefitting both the university and the social enterprises. They achieve this through various means, including inviting social entrepreneurs to contribute on academic courses, hosting promotional events to raise awareness for the sector; and engaging students in consultancy services to simultaneously help social enterprises devise solutions to their challenges and educate students through experiential learning.

**Incubation:**

The 'Ljubljana University Incubator' is an incubation facility where new social enterprises can develop. Benefits for these enterprises include the provision of expertise, training, placement students, research, and goods and services promotion. Many start-up social ventures incubated here have gone on to become successful enterprises, such as Chariyo; a crowd-action platform for charities and causes enabling individuals to raise funds by creating a unique connection between causes, advertisers and individual supporters of a cause. iHELP is another successful incubate, a mobile phone application enterprise that sends an SOS text message alert in the event of a person having a medical condition that requires immediate attention. It creates a care network, bringing family, friends, first responders and professional rescuers closer together in cases of emergency.

**The benefits:**

Working with social enterprises has benefitted the university in a number of different ways. These include contribution to research activities; ensuring links with the local economy; supporting an increased link between the University and their community; enriching the curriculum for students; providing students with practical experiences; and through attracting new students who want to expand their future opportunities.

Contact Details: [www.uni-lj.si](http://www.uni-lj.si)



**Case study: Academy of Visual Arts (A.V.A.) Institute****Institution overview:**

The A.V.A. Institute, Academy of Visual Arts, was established in 2008 by artist and production designer Pepi Sekulich. His vision was to bring the quality and positive experience of his higher education in the UK to his own country, Slovenia. Sekulich felt that the HE opportunities in art and design in Slovenia were outdated, and particularly limited in the fields of production design in film and theatre, and fine art.

The Academy of Visual Arts was created as an independent, self-funding specialist institution to address this gap in provision; and is subsequently one of the newest providers of higher education in Slovenia. Currently, annual student numbers range between 6 and 12; and being a private, fee paying institution has presented considerable difficulties and financial pressures for the institute to contend with.

**Approach to social enterprise:**

AVA, by definition, is in itself a social enterprise. It has a commitment to work with social enterprise as part of its HEI mission and strategy. They are motivated to work with them to improve the student experience, to address national needs and to generate income for the institute itself.

The institute is particularly supportive of social enterprises creating employment opportunities, developing a specific community and/ or promoting education and literacy. They aspire to increase their level of support for social enterprise in the future; with plans to provide funding, expertise, placement students and the use of their facilities to enterprises in need.

**The institute as a social enterprise:**

To ensure its survival and provide an income stream, it was decided that the institute would run a hostel facility within the building occupied by AVA, existing in parallel with the day-to-day running of its educational programmes throughout the year. All income from the hostel, which is active throughout the year and offers full occupancy during the summer months, is fed back into meeting the expenses of running AVA. Students are offered paid employment in various roles in the administration of the hostel, which assists them in meeting the demands of funding their higher education, and ensures the hostel continues running efficiently.

Contact Details: [www.ava.si](http://www.ava.si)

## Case study: University of Maribor

### Institution overview:

Established as a university in 1975, the University of Maribor, 'UM', is the second biggest and the second oldest university in Slovenia. There are around 18,000 students who currently study across its seventeen faculties, which offer undergraduate and postgraduate study programmes. The university's main campus is located in the city of Maribor, but as a regional developer UM also has faculties based in other parts of Slovenia. The university's vision is to become a globally recognised innovation ecosystem, inspiring the creativity of both employees and students.

### Approach to social enterprise:

The concept of social enterprise is embedded throughout the University of Maribor in several ways, including: through pedagogy and teaching; research; further education and training; and engaging employees in partnerships with local and national bodies to build an ecosystem of support for social entrepreneurship.

### Social enterprise, teaching and research:

UM provides modules on social entrepreneurship across various schools and courses, at both an undergraduate (e.g. Entrepreneurship and Environmental Economics) and postgraduate (e.g. Sustainable Entrepreneurship) level. Each year faculty staff support Masters and Doctoral stage students to conduct research on social enterprise. Some of the research theses published to date include comparisons of social entrepreneurship work across European countries and using social enterprise to develop sustainable communities.

In addition to curriculum support, research staff housed within the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB) at UM also lead several longitudinal research programmes and projects concerned with the social enterprise sector. These include:

- The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) research project; the largest longitudinal entrepreneurship study in the world, which has featured social enterprise as a key theme since 2009.
- The Slovenian Entrepreneurship Observatory; a long-term project exploring the prevalence of socially responsible entrepreneurship in Slovenia.
- The "FEB and social responsibility" programme; run on an ongoing basis since 2012, promoting social enterprise through a series of lectures and workshops for students, faculty, staff and other interested audiences. They invite expert lecturers and social entrepreneurs from across Slovenia, and internationally, to talk on corporate social responsibility, the internationalisation of socially responsible and sustainable companies, and conduct 'think pieces' focused on the dichotomy of freedom and the welfare state.

### Incubation:

The university incubator, 'Enterprise Factory' ('Tovarna Podjemov') offers services to start-up companies established by students, employees and visitors to the University of Maribor. Among incubated companies are also enterprises which contribute to solving societal problems, among which are companies AsK d.o.o. (development of intelligent warning systems for road and rail transportation) and Drugi vid d.o.o. (development of software solutions for the blind and partially sighted individuals).

Contact Details: [www.um.si](http://www.um.si)



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