

# PARTICIPATORY MODEL OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT AS A DETERMINANT OF VETERANS' AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS' REINTEGRATION: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Anna Verbytska<sup>1</sup>, Nadiia Nahorna<sup>2</sup>, Hanna Dyvnych<sup>3</sup>

**Abstract.** The purpose of the paper is to state the theoretical framework for the formation of a participatory model of social entrepreneurship development as a tool for the reintegration of military personnel, veterans and their family members, based on the identified views of veterans and their family members regarding the role of certain institutions of society in the development processes of social entrepreneurship. *Methodology.* The research is based on the results of a survey with blocks of questions aimed at studying certain aspects of the participatory approach to the development of social entrepreneurship: the state, hromada, business, education, as well as the specifics of involving veterans and their families in these processes. The study sample included people with the status of combatants, war veterans, and their family members who were participants in the Ukraine-Norway project "Retraining and social adaptation of military personnel and their family members in Ukraine", which was implemented at the Chernihiv Polytechnic National University in 2016-2022. The results of the survey showed that the expectations of veterans and their family members from the state regarding the development of social entrepreneurship are: the establishment of "clear rules of the game" – not only the development and implementation of relevant legislation, but also the formation of transparent and detailed procedures for starting a social enterprise and its development; the development and implementation of programmes for the social reintegration of veterans into civilian life through support for the creation of social enterprises (financial support, preferential taxation). In terms of the role of business in supporting the return of veterans to civilian life through the opening of social enterprises, respondents see it mainly as providing financial support to those social enterprises set up by veterans and their family members. The hromada, as the embodiment of the public sector, appears in the perceptions of veterans and their family members as a centre for social support, for finding ways to protect their rights, and for finding resources to meet their needs (including employment or starting their own business). The opinion of the interviewed veterans and their family members regarding the involvement of education in supporting the development of social entrepreneurship can be summarised as follows: the involvement of experts in the development of effective strategies for the development of both social entrepreneurship in the interest of veterans and education from it; the development of short-term social entrepreneurship training programmes (non-formal education courses) involving business, hromada and government representatives. *Practical implications.* The revealed results could be used for further scientific and practical research: development of directions of the programme of social and psychological support for reintegration of military personnel, veterans of ATO/UFO and their family members with their active involvement in social entrepreneurship. *Value / Originality.* The developed theoretical framework for the formation of a participatory model for the development of social entrepreneurship as a tool for the reintegration of military personnel, veterans and their family members, based on the identified

<sup>1</sup> Chernihiv Polytechnic National University, Ukraine (*corresponding author*)

E-mail: [anna.verbytska@stu.cn.ua](mailto:anna.verbytska@stu.cn.ua)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7805-1412>

ResearcherID: U-8619-2019

<sup>2</sup> Chernihiv Polytechnic National University, Ukraine

E-mail: [n.nagorna@stu.cn.ua](mailto:n.nagorna@stu.cn.ua)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9988-7750>

ResearcherID: J-2493-2016

<sup>3</sup> Chernihiv Polytechnic National University, Ukraine

E-mail: [a.dyvnych@stu.cn.ua](mailto:a.dyvnych@stu.cn.ua)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4240-5391>

ResearcherID: R-1613-2016



views of veterans and their family members regarding the role of certain institutions of society in the development processes of social entrepreneurship, points to further methodological and applied research: the development of a set of recommendations for the practical implementation of the proposed model at different taxonomic levels.

**Keywords:** social entrepreneurship, participation, reintegration of veterans, stakeholders, hromada.

**JEL Classification:** L31, M14

## 1. Introduction

Social entrepreneurship plays a key role in building sustainable and inclusive societies, contributing to solving social problems and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (Lubberink, 2019). While social entrepreneurship aims to solve social problems through entrepreneurial activities, it plays an important role in supporting and strengthening social justice and economic equality. The active participation of citizens in decision-making, as a key component of democratic governance, is particularly important in the context of solving complex social problems. Participation promotes the active involvement of citizens in the decision-making process that affects their lives. The ability of citizens to participate in the formulation of policies and programmes allows them to influence the socio-economic order and contributes to the construction of a civil society. In this context, social entrepreneurship, as an effective tool that combines entrepreneurial initiative with social change, allows not only to create sustainable economic models, but also to increase the level of social well-being and reduce inequalities in society.

Social entrepreneurship can be defined as innovative human activity that leads to systemic social or environmental change, generates income and has a significant impact on regional economic growth. In this way, social entrepreneurs create new jobs, pay taxes and increase the level of prosperity in a given area. Social entrepreneurship can help solve a number of social problems in Ukraine: the low standard of living, unemployment, high poverty rate among the working population (Revko, 2017). It is obvious that in the conditions of martial law in Ukraine, social entrepreneurship develops taking into account specific features. In particular, a participatory or partnership approach to the organisation of interaction at the state level for the development of social entrepreneurship as an institution should be highlighted. There is also an increased manifestation in the activation of the involvement of social entrepreneurs and their teams in solving social and humanitarian problems of needy individuals or in the performance of military tasks as defenders of Ukraine (Nahorna, 2023).

Hromada's participation in the development of social entrepreneurship is a key success factor. According to foreign researchers, social entrepreneurship training contributes to hromada enrichment and should be based on a participatory approach. The development

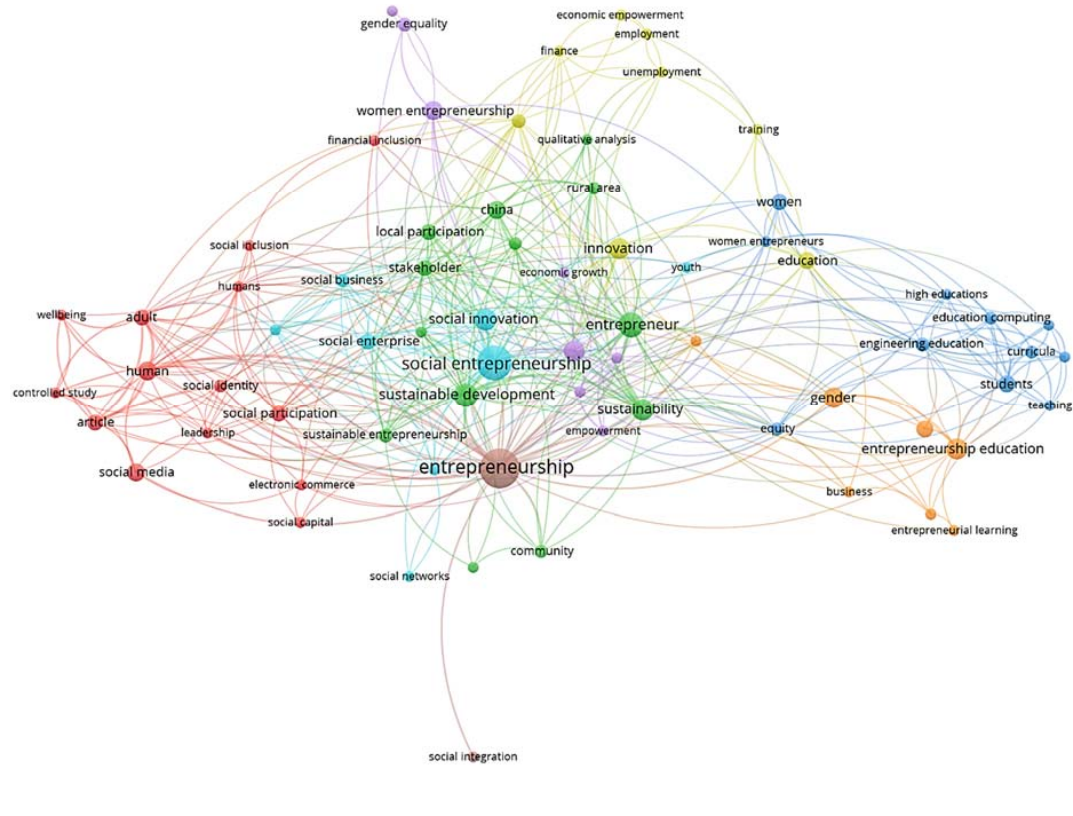
of social entrepreneurship requires the use of business and social principles to implement social change. The process of teaching social entrepreneurship, based on the principle of participation, involves an individual or a group in the planning, implementation and evaluation of social entrepreneurship activities. The strategy of social entrepreneurship education based on the principle of participation demonstrates the role of society in creating various opportunities for the social development of society (Hidayat & Putra, 2020).

Hromada's participation has the potential to create the necessary environment for social enterprises to fulfil their social mission. It not only provides opportunities for social enterprises, but also benefits hromadas in terms of increasing their capacity and building a sustainable social fabric. Participation enables social entrepreneurs and their teams to build relationships and trust within hromadas and to change social norms that hinder the development of local hromadas. Foreign researchers are convinced that a participatory approach, the creation of innovations and hromada involvement allow hromadas to achieve social integration (Kummitha, 2017).

## 2. Theoretical Framework of the Participatory Model of Social Entrepreneurship Development as a Determinant of Veterans' and their Family Members' Reintegration

Understanding the essence of participation as the basis for the development of social entrepreneurship is the first step towards finding a new model of social entrepreneurship as a determinant of reintegration of veterans and their families.

Figure 1 presents a cognitive model of the interaction of keywords in publications related to participation and social entrepreneurship research. Analysing the information provided in Figure 1, it can be determined that in publications on participation and social entrepreneurship, scholars pay most attention to the following aspects: social entrepreneurship is associated with social innovation and innovation, solving social problems, sustainable development, local participation and social participation, empowerment, stakeholder and hromada engagement, economic growth, social integration and social capital. A separate aspect of research interest related to the study of participation and social entrepreneurship is entrepreneurship



**Figure 1.** Visual map of keywords in publications where the keywords "participation" and "social entrepreneurship" are found simultaneously

Source: developed by the authors using the VOS viewer tool based on the analysis of the Scopus database

education. Thus, the analysis has clearly shown the relationship between social entrepreneurship and its ability to address social problems, promote gender equality, empowerment and social inclusion. The role of social participation and stakeholder engagement in social entrepreneurship is evident, as is the need for education and training to prepare social entrepreneurs.

Previous studies show that the concept of "participation" is multifaceted and is used in different fields of scholarship. The concept of "participation" is linked to such things as individual subjectivity, subject-subject interaction, social cohesion, social involvement, inclusion, social and psychological empowerment, shared decision-making, shared responsibility, monitoring, hromada social capital, etc. The basic understanding of the term "participation" defines it as the process and results of the joint involvement of separate individuals and their groups in the development of practical solutions for solving or improving the acuteness of existing social challenges; strategies and policies of hromada development (Nahorna, 2022).

Foreign studies show a strong link between participation and socio-cultural and economic aspects of social inclusion: participation can improve access

to social security, promote social cohesion, break down cultural barriers and overcome discrimination. Participation also affects political and institutional aspects of social inclusion: public safety, government accountability, reduction of corruption. Participation is also seen as a tool for reducing poverty and inequality. Stimulating the process of participation helps to ensure good governance and the development of an inclusive society (Nwachi, 2021).

Empirical research has found the impact of social participation on the social integration of vulnerable groups to be positive and significant (Xie et al., 2022). The need to involve civil society in the creation of a system of reintegration of veterans is found in domestic studies (Seiko & Zakharina, 2023). Social entrepreneurship is related to the processes of reintegration of military personnel, ATO/UFO veterans and their family members. As a field of activity, social entrepreneurship corresponds to specific principles of reintegration, one of which is participatory (social entrepreneurship includes inclusion, involvement of all subjects of interaction) (Nahorna & Maskom, 2022).

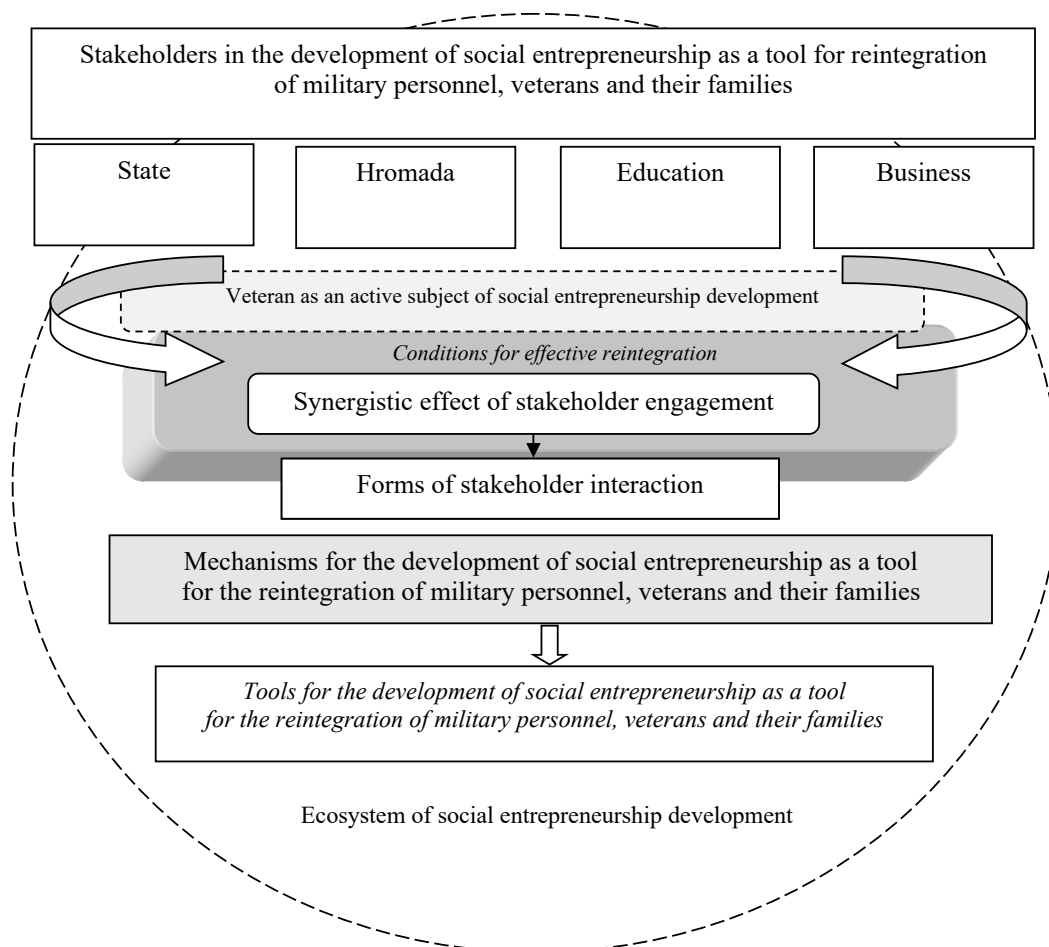
In previous studies, the authors found that key stakeholders in social entrepreneurship should play an important role in the reintegration of military personnel, veterans and their families: the state, which,

through incentive mechanisms, should determine the institutional framework and strategy for the development of social entrepreneurship; the hromada, where social enterprises should be created, social capital and social participation should be formed to achieve social change based on a bottom-up initiative; business as an investor, partner, mentor; education as a tool for raising awareness of social entrepreneurship, developing entrepreneurship and emotional intelligence, increasing motivation for the creation of social enterprises by military personnel, veterans, and so forth (Verbytska et al., 2023).

The synergetic effect of the "state-hromada-business-education" cooperation makes social enterprises for veterans an important sector of the social economy, creating opportunities for the formation of social capital. In order to create an effective system of reintegration of servicemen and veterans in the long term, it is important to have a comprehensive approach and improve coordination between stakeholders, which can be ensured by creating a participatory model.

In general, participatory modelling has been used in a variety of knowledge domains, with a focus on stakeholder participation to create models that can shape policy and increase interaction and trust between hromadas and research groups (Quimby & Beresford, 2023).

Figure 2 presents the theoretical framework for the formation of a participatory model for the development of social entrepreneurship as a tool for the reintegration of military personnel, veterans and their family members. Given the limited state resources, the active cooperation of the state, civil society institutions, business and higher education institutions is the key to the formation of an effective system of reintegration of servicemen, veterans and their family members. In the long term, an integrated approach and improved coordination between stakeholders is important, which can be implemented through a participatory model. The integration of joint interaction is able to qualitatively strengthen activities related to the reintegration of military personnel, veterans and their family members as a strategic priority of the state policy of Ukraine.



**Figure 2. Theoretical foundations for the formation of a participatory model of social entrepreneurship development as a tool for reintegration of military personnel, veterans and their families**

Source: developed by the authors

The basis of the conceptualisation of the participatory model of social entrepreneurship development as a determinant of reintegration is the matrix of interaction of key actors of social entrepreneurship development ("state-hromada-business-education") as a determinant of reintegration of military personnel, veterans and their family members developed by the authors. The developed matrix takes into account the interests of each stakeholder group and determines their roles and responsibilities in the joint process of synergistic interaction (participation) for the development of social entrepreneurship as a determinant of the reintegration of military personnel, veterans and their family members. The matrix defines: by the public administration component, the functions and responsibilities of the state, such as creating financial instruments, providing educational and psychological programmes, and regulating business processes; by the public administration component, it takes into account the development of local initiatives, creating a favourable social environment and attracting local resources to support social enterprises; by economic component – defines the mechanisms of financial support, training programmes and development of entrepreneurial skills; by educational component – the role of higher education institutions in the formation of competences and development of personal qualities in the field of social entrepreneurship (Verbytska et al., 2023).

At the same time, an important role in the development of social entrepreneurship is assigned to veterans and their family members as active subjects of their own social reintegration. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account their needs, aspirations and opportunities for participation in the development of social changes at the hromada level. Sociological studies (Kirillova et al., 2023) determine the range of needs of veterans for employment in peaceful life, and also record the ideas of Ukrainian defenders about the range of personal qualities and skills acquired during the defence of the country, which can be useful to them in their future life and activity. The study of individual psychological characteristics of veterans and their family members as subjects of social entrepreneurship (Nahorna & Maksom, 2023) indicates a fairly high level of achievement motivation and a high level of purposefulness and determination regarding social entrepreneurship in the future. However, the researchers noted certain gaps in the understanding of the nature of social entrepreneurship itself, its mission and importance for the development of hromadas and society, distorted ideas about entrepreneurial approaches to such activities, as well as rather low indicators of the development of general entrepreneurial skills (the need for independence and autonomy, the ability to take a calculated risk, the inclination to be creative). This already indicates

the need for comprehensive efforts by all stakeholders to develop social entrepreneurship in Ukraine as a tool for social reintegration of veterans and their family members. The above analysis of the peculiarities of the state-hromada-business-education interaction for the implementation of social entrepreneurship indicates the important steps of each of the listed stakeholders. However, the participatory nature of social entrepreneurship development includes the involvement of veterans themselves and their family members in the initiation and implementation of relevant decisions and actions. Therefore, there is a need for research to determine the views of veterans and their family members regarding the role of certain institutions of society in the development processes of social entrepreneurship.

### 3. Survey Methodology

The research was carried out using the complex methodology within the project "Participatory model of social entrepreneurship development as a determinant of reintegration of veterans and their family members". This methodology included blocks of questions aimed at exploring certain aspects of the participatory approach to the development of social entrepreneurship: the state, the hromada, the economy, education, and the specifics of the involvement of the veterans themselves and their family members in these processes. The survey was carried out using the Microsoft Office Forms programme.

The research sample included persons with the status of combatants, war veterans (33.3%) and their family members (66.7%), who were listeners of the project "Ukraine-Norway" – "Retraining and social adaptation of military personnel and their family members in Ukraine", implemented at the Chernihiv Polytechnic National University in 2016–2022. The respondents are 89 people aged 18 to 52, 19 men and 70 women. The respondents indicated that 3 of them have disabilities, and 2 have the status of an internally displaced person.

### 4. Findings

In terms of content, the questions in the questionnaire were grouped into several blocks. First, there were questions related to the definition of the respondents' ideas about the nature and social value of social entrepreneurship. The results showed that the concept of "social entrepreneurship" is well known to 48% of the respondents, who, when determining the social value of this type of activity, unanimously indicated that it can be a tool to support veterans and their family members. In addition, 24% of respondents indicated that they had heard of the term before, but did not fully understand its essence. Another 30% had

no previous knowledge of the nature and specifics of social entrepreneurship, and it was these respondents who answered negatively to the question about their experience in both public and entrepreneurial activities.

The answers to the following questions were given after the respondents were briefly informed about the specifics of social entrepreneurship and its main characteristics. Therefore, when determining the role of this type of activity in society, the vast majority of respondents chose such options (the result was calculated by the frequency of mentions) as: contributes to solving social problems (61.9%); provides support to vulnerable groups of the population, including veterans and their family members (61.9%); creates a mechanism for implementing social changes (38.1%). It is worth noting that an option such as "creation of products unique to the market by a social enterprise" was not selected at all by the respondents. According to the authors, this result may indicate that the respondents do not equate social entrepreneurship with innovative activities, but rather with enterprises that are similar to traditional enterprises, but which have a significant social impact.

The answers of the respondents to the questions about the specifics of social entrepreneurship support for veterans and their family members are interesting. For example, the overwhelming majority of respondents (61.9%), who had to choose from several options, pointed to the provision of support to the target group in the form of separate social services (organisation of meaningful free time, work with a social worker or psychologist). This result reflects the respondents' perception of the passive support that can be provided by social entrepreneurship. The options chosen by the respondents correspond to the notion of a more active role in realising the reintegration opportunities of social entrepreneurship, including the following: veterans and their family members acquire new skills and experience to realise themselves in other enterprises in the future (61.9%); the possibility of employment in the social enterprise itself (38.1%); provision of advice on setting up their own social enterprise (42.9%).

The last question in this block was to find out the veterans' and their family members' ideas about the need to involve different representatives of society in the development of social entrepreneurship. In particular, the vast majority of respondents (the result was calculated by the frequency of mentions) pointed to the decisive involvement of the veterans themselves and their family members in these processes (71.4%). The result for the option to involve not only the veterans themselves, but also all key stakeholders in the development of social entrepreneurship (state, hromada, business and education) is also high – 57.1%. In authors' opinion, veterans and their family

members underestimate the need for business participation in social entrepreneurship development processes – only 14.2% of respondents chose this option.

The second block of the questionnaire related to the involvement in the development of social entrepreneurship, both of the veterans themselves and their family members, and of the key stakeholders in this process (state, hromada, business and education). In order to determine the role of the state in supporting the return of veterans to civilian life through the development of social entrepreneurship, respondents had the opportunity to indicate several options. The most frequently selected options were the development of a legal framework regarding the nature and characteristics of social entrepreneurship (66.7%), the development and implementation of strategies for the reintegration of veterans into civilian life, including through social entrepreneurship (47.6%), the implementation of financial support mechanisms for the development of social entrepreneurship by veterans (38%). At the same time, only 14.3% of respondents chose such an option as information campaigns in society about the nature and characteristics of social entrepreneurship, especially veteran entrepreneurship.

Regarding the steps that veterans and their family members think the state should take for the development of social entrepreneurship by this population group, similar to the answers to the previous question, the respondents chose (the result was calculated by the frequency of mentions): creation of a legal environment favourable to the development of social entrepreneurship (61.9%); implementation of special support programmes for social enterprises opened by veterans and their family members (52.4%); ensuring access to financial resources through state soft credit programmes (42.9%). In authors' opinion, the answer to the option of providing veterans with access to business counselling and support in setting up their own business was interesting – it was not chosen by any of the respondents. At the same time, the need for such counselling was mentioned by veterans and their family members as one of the ways to support them through social entrepreneurship.

Therefore, the expectations of veterans and their family members from the state regarding the development of social entrepreneurship are: the establishment of "clear rules of the game" – not only the development and implementation of relevant legislation, but also the formation of transparent and detailed procedures for starting a social enterprise and its development; the development and implementation of programmes for the social reintegration of veterans into civilian life through support for the creation of social enterprises (financial support, preferential taxation).

Regarding the role of business in supporting veterans' return to civilian life by opening social enterprises, respondents see it mainly as providing financial support to those social enterprises set up by veterans and their family members (66.7%). Interestingly, 38% of respondents define the role of business as providing consulting/mentoring for veterans to start their own business.

At the same time, an analysis of respondents' answers about the steps that businesses should take to develop social entrepreneurship among veterans and their families shows that 61.9% of respondents confirmed their expectations of funding for launching their own social enterprise (on a non-refundable basis), as well as providing advice at the stage of idea development (61.9%). It is worth noting that the responses reveal the possibility of cooperation between business and education as key stakeholders in the development of social entrepreneurship: 42.9% of respondents indicated the need to involve business representatives in the social entrepreneurship education process as practitioners, mentors, and experts on certain issues.

The role of the hromada (representatives of the public sector) in supporting the return of veterans to civilian life through the opening of social enterprises is seen by respondents mainly in the creation of public associations by veterans or the participation of this target group in such associations in order to realise their social interests and satisfy their needs – 66.7%. It is worth noting that only 38.1% of respondents have previous experience of civic engagement. This surge in public activity is due to close cooperation with volunteers and civic activists who continue to support Ukrainian servicemen, veterans and their families, which undoubtedly motivates them to follow suit and brings their public activities to a new level.

After analysing the answers to the question about what steps the hromada should take to develop social entrepreneurship of veterans and their families, it can be considered as a request. The respondents see the involvement of the public sector by supporting the creation and development of a network of social enterprises specialised in the integration of veterans and their family members – 57.1%. The possibility of receiving a grant for the creation or development of their own social enterprise is also very popular among respondents (52.4%). Respondents see the possibility of mobilising such resources by participating in training projects of public organisations (47.6%). Therefore, according to the results of the survey, the hromada, as the personification of the public sector, appears in the perception of veterans and their family members as a centre of social support, of finding ways to protect their rights, as well as of resources to meet their needs (including employment or starting their own business).

When describing the role of education in supporting veterans' return to civilian life through

the establishment of social enterprises, respondents preferred the option of developing the necessary competencies to start and develop a social enterprise (76.2%). The respondents repeatedly supported the need to involve representatives of business, the public sector and the state in the organisation and implementation of the social entrepreneurship education process (61.9%). According to the respondents, such a participatory format of education will provide an opportunity to establish new social contacts for the implementation of social entrepreneurship initiatives in the interest of veterans and their family members, to develop a circle of potential partnerships at the local level. It is worth noting that 38.1% of respondents see the role of education in shaping the psychological readiness of veterans and their family members for social entrepreneurship. This result indicates a sufficient level of need among the respondents to develop their own entrepreneurial, professional and personal qualities for future social and entrepreneurial activities.

Regarding the steps that should be implemented by education (educational institutions) for the development of social entrepreneurship among veterans and their family members, the respondents preferred among the options: involvement of scientific experts in the development of a state strategy for the development of social entrepreneurship among veterans and their family members (38.1%); development and implementation of recommendations for social entrepreneurship education among veterans and their family members (42.9%). At the same time, the following options attracted the respondents' attention: involving business representatives, public activists in the educational process (28.6%); holding joint events with representatives of key stakeholders to find partners, resources and present the results of the work (23.8%); organising informal educational courses on social entrepreneurship at universities (23.8%). It is worth noting that the option of introducing an educational discipline on social entrepreneurship did not receive significant support from respondents (4.7%).

Thus, the opinion of the interviewed veterans and their family members regarding the involvement of education in supporting the development of social entrepreneurship can be summarised as follows: involvement of experts in the development of effective strategies for the development of both social entrepreneurship in the interest of veterans and education from it; development of short-term social entrepreneurship training programmes (non-formal education courses) involving business, hromada and government representatives.

Another important section of the questionnaire was to determine the role of veterans themselves in the development of social entrepreneurship and the steps they are ready to take to do so. Therefore, by

formulating options for answering the question about the role of veterans and their family members in the development of social entrepreneurship, the authors aimed to determine the level of participation (readiness to engage) of the respondents themselves. That is why, recognising the role of veterans, respondents were asked to choose between three levels of personal involvement: expecting changes from others, interest in changes and putting forward ideas, and active participation in creating these changes. As a result, the respondents' opinions were split between these three options, with a slight advantage in favour of active engagement (38.1%).

In terms of specific actions, veterans and their family members indicate their willingness to participate in social support activities carried out by social enterprises (61.9%); to participate in grant competitions for the establishment of their own social enterprise (61.9%); to receive free short-term training on the specified topic (57.1%). That is to say, these most frequently chosen options for action by the veterans themselves and their family members to develop social entrepreneurship generally correspond to a rather passive expectation of changes in the environment. However, 38.1% of respondents chose the following options as real steps for them: developing a business plan for a future social enterprise, as well as looking for financial resources to start a social entrepreneurial activity. It is worth noting that the respondents were generally unwilling to hire employees from vulnerable groups to work in a social enterprise, with only 4.5% seeing such support for veterans and their family members. This aspect, among others, is part of the formation of a person's psychological readiness for social entrepreneurship.

## 6. Conclusions

Thus, the results of the theoretical and empirical research provide grounds for the following conclusions: 1. Identification of vectors of interaction between key stakeholders in the development of social entrepreneurship (state-hromada-business-education),

in line with the essence of the participatory approach, should take into account the interests and characteristics of military personnel, veterans and their families in the context of their reintegration into civilian life.

2. In order to determine the specifics of the target group's perception of the role of each stakeholder, as well as the veterans themselves and their family members, an empirical study was conducted and its results analysed in the context of social entrepreneurship development.

3. A rather low level of awareness of respondents about the essence and features of social entrepreneurship was revealed. Existing perceptions are characterised by stereotypes about innovation, profitability and the ability to implement change.

4. In a superficial explanation of the nature and specifics of social entrepreneurship, the vast majority of respondents pointed to its important role in the reintegration of veterans and their families. Nevertheless, the format of this contribution to the full return of veterans and their families to civilian life was mostly passive (in the form of social services or employment in the social enterprise itself).

5. Regarding the role of key stakeholders in the development of social entrepreneurship in supporting veterans and their families in reintegration, respondents generally point to the need for an active position of the veteran himself or herself. However, a detailed analysis of the answers to specific questions revealed the dominance of a passive position, expectations from the state, business, education and NGOs as intermediaries in providing financial resources.

6. The findings indicate the need for further scientific and practical research: development of a programme of social and psychological support for the reintegration of military personnel, ATO/UFO veterans and their families with their active involvement in social entrepreneurship.

7. The developed theoretical foundations for the formation of a participatory model of social entrepreneurship development point to further methodological and applied research: development of a set of recommendations for the practical implementation of the proposed model at different taxonomic levels.

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Received on: 07th of March, 2024

Accepted on: 16th of May, 2024

Published on: 10th of June, 2024