



**ENTREPRENEURSHIP TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY?
– COMPARING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITH SOCIALLY
RESPONSIBLE SMES IN HUNGARY**

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ABSTRACT

The term 'social entrepreneur' (SE) is understood here as change agent, who implements innovative and sustainable solutions to complex, severe and often systemic problems faced by typically marginalized groups of society. Their major entrepreneurial characteristics are usually captured as being imaginary, innovative, accepting high level of risks, ability to implement their vision, and leadership capabilities. If these are the similarities with entrepreneurs in general than what are the special characteristics of SEs that drive them pursuing their entrepreneurial goals toward a sustainable community? This fundamental question is analysed placing social entrepreneurs in a sustainability and corporate social responsibility framework. As particularly differentiating factors, the motivations of social entrepreneurs are examined in comparison with owner-managers of socially responsible small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Research Methodology: In-depth semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 10 SEs and 20 owner-managers of SMEs having a good track record in CSR in Hungary.

Background of Research: A Social Entrepreneurs elective course was developed for graduate students and has entered the business school curriculum for two years. A picture of very rich and diverse set of SEs' motivations and personalities has been confronted in the local case studies prepared for the course. Now this picture is compared to the motivations of responsible SMEs.

Research Topics and Preliminary Findings: Both SE-SME similarities (e.g. perception of being 'alternative') and differences (e.g. perception of being 'embedded') have been captured while specific characteristics of SEs (e.g. commitment not (only) to the major stakeholder groups but to the activity/core competence itself) were reinforced.