



Review

Social Entrepreneurial Initiatives Supporting Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Scoping Review of Interventions and Outcomes

Nicoleta Moron

Department of Sociology, Social Work and Human Resources, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași,
700506 Iași, Romania; nicoleta.moron@uaic.ro

Abstract

The potential of social entrepreneurship to address persistent social problems through innovative and sustainable solutions has been increasingly recognized in recent decades. While persons with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) tend to face significant challenges related to social participation and educational and professional integration, there are social entrepreneurs that have developed initiatives to address their needs. This paper aims to identify and map such initiatives in order to emphasize the dimensions of the interventions and their outcomes. Our study is based on a scoping review and analysis of 41 articles published in international databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, ProQuest and Google Scholar. The findings reveal distinctive features of SEIs targeting people with ASD. Some positive outcomes of social enterprises (SEs) have been identified, including favorable effects on beneficiaries and significant social return on investment (SROI), but most research is limited to short-term results with relatively fragmented presentation of data. Considering the complexity of the issues addressed, further research on the impact of SEs and the extension of studies to long-term outcomes is essential for a better understanding of their sustainable social benefits. This study offers an overview of the existing literature in the area, identifies the gaps, and provides guidance for future research.

Keywords: social entrepreneurship; social enterprise; social innovation; autism spectrum disorder; scoping review

1. Introduction

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) represents an increasingly prevalent condition (Seçer et al. 2025), “characterized by lifelong neurodevelopmental issues impacting social interaction and communication” (Bertelli et al. 2025, p. 1). It is estimated that currently “approximately 1% of the global population is affected by ASD” (Bertelli et al. 2025, p. 1); this disorder is present in persons of varied ethnic origins and socioeconomic status (Kohli et al. 2025).

According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5), ASD involves “persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts, including deficits in social reciprocity, nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction, and skills in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships”, as well as “restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities” (American Psychiatric Association 2013, p. 31).

People with ASD are more frequently exposed to stigma and social exclusion (Seçer et al. 2025), and face difficulties in securing independent living. Moreover, their “education



Academic Editor: Rocco Frondizi

Received: 17 December 2025

Revised: 11 February 2026

Accepted: 12 February 2026

Published: 15 February 2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the author.

Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland.

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and

conditions of the [Creative Commons](#)

[Attribution \(CC BY\)](#) license.

and employment levels are low, even when general intelligence is within the normal range” (Barneveld et al. 2014, p. 302). Children with ASD are more likely to miss school and repeat a grade (Barneveld et al. 2014), while adults face an increased risk of adverse occupational outcomes and barriers to obtaining employment (Nicholas and Lau 2019; Dennis et al. 2024). Unemployment tends to be high among adults with ASD (Correia et al. 2025), which is associated with dependence on social services and a lower quality of life (Nicholas and Lau 2019). Studies indicate that this risk remains elevated even in adults with high levels of functioning and education (Barneveld et al. 2014).

Despite inclusive education policies, children with ASD continue to experience difficulties in school adjustment and access to education (McCabe and Deng 2018). In addition, policies meant to encourage employers to enter into employment contracts with people with disabilities tend to have a limited impact on job retention among persons with ASD (Schuurmans et al. 2024). Such persistent social challenges usually require innovative and sustainable approaches to support social inclusion and to improve the quality of life of people with ASD.

The potential of social entrepreneurial initiatives (SEIs) to address social problems mismanaged by traditional institutions is now widely recognized (Bornstein and Davis 2010). These initiatives “are often ascribed innovative roles for the public good” (Gawell 2013) and it is considered that “social innovation and social entrepreneurship initiatives can play a significant role in addressing the great challenges of the 21st century, including poverty alleviation, social inclusion and climate change mitigation” (Correia et al. 2025).

Although there is an expanding body of literature dedicated to social entrepreneurship, this concept and the related terms “are far from obvious and easy to specify” (Andersen et al. 2016, p. 2). *Social entrepreneurship* is “a generic term for initiatives that are innovative, cross cutting and often targeted at socially disadvantaged people. However, social entrepreneurship is also a phenomenon that contains considerable ambivalence stretched around the powerful dynamics of individualisation and collectivisation, between the social and the market, between marginality and mainstream and between neoliberalism and the solidarity economy” (Andersen et al. 2016, p. 1). Overall, this concept encompasses three key elements: “social innovation, accountability, and sustainability” (Kamaludin et al. 2024). In turn, the concept of *social enterprise* (SE) refers to “the tangible outcome of social entrepreneurship” (Mair and Martí 2006, p. 37). These entities present different forms of organization (Medeleanu 2013) and are constantly expanding “as they seek different forms of legitimacy both in the market-place and in the social communities which they serve” (Mitra 2019, p. 123).

The literature provides evidence of the significant contribution of social entrepreneurship in reducing social inequalities, including the social integration of disadvantaged groups (Fernández-Guadano and Diez 2024; Turyakira et al. 2025). “Higher levels of social entrepreneurship are associated with higher growth rates of total employment and vulnerable worker employment” (Kim 2024, p. 1). SEs contribute to the socio-professional inclusion of vulnerable people by creating jobs (Rakar and Uršič 2025), providing an appropriate “stigma-free environment” (Lysaght et al. 2024, p. 42) and “economic empowerment” (Nuchian et al. 2024). This “economic empowerment” of vulnerable people takes on new dimensions in the context of SEIs that support the self-employment of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by cultivating entrepreneurial skills among beneficiaries (Alborno and Kalaji 2024). A study published in 2024 shows that entrepreneurship offers important benefits to people with intellectual disabilities who present “high entrepreneurship tendency” by increasing quality of life as well as job and life satisfaction (Barba-Sánchez et al. 2024). Likewise, engaging people with autism in social entrepreneurial activities has the potential to provide benefits at the individual level (avoiding discrimination in the labor

market, better control over the work environment by eliminating factors that can cause “distress” and involvement in attractive fields for people with ASD), at the community level (increasing awareness of ASD) and socially (creating more appropriate services for this category of beneficiaries and innovative responses to their needs) (Zivkovic 2024).

Even though there is increasing interest in social entrepreneurship and the expansion of initiatives addressing the needs of people with ASD in an innovative way, research in this area remains quite fragmented, especially when referring to this group of beneficiaries. A preliminary review of the literature conducted to gain insight into this topic revealed that most papers dedicated to analyzing SEIs that support people with ASD are either based on case studies or are theoretical articles that only mention these initiatives to support their hypotheses. However, based on the information we have, there are no comprehensive studies that provide evidence on the general features of the different initiatives and the impact they have on beneficiaries.

Aim, Objectives and Research Method

This study aims to address the gap identified by conducting a literature review with the purpose of identifying and mapping SEIs that support people with ASD, highlighting their key characteristics.

The objectives of the study focused on

- (1) *Exploring the dimensions of social entrepreneurial interventions that address the needs of people with ASD and*
- (2) *Analyzing the outcomes of SEIs supporting persons with ASD.*

To achieve the objectives, we carried out a *scoping review*, which constitutes a “‘mapping’, a process of summarizing a range of evidence in order to convey the breadth and depth of a field” (Levac et al. 2010, p. 1). In contrast to systematic reviews, which “are useful for answering clearly defined questions” scoping reviews answer “much broader questions” (Tricco et al. 2018, p. 1). Given the emerging nature of the topic analyzed, we appreciate that a scoping review best aligns with the objectives of this study.

The logic of the literature review, the process, and theoretical support for its implementation will be described in the next section dedicated to the methodological framework.

2. Materials and Methods

The research strategy is based on the methodology proposed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005), adjusted to align with the purpose of the present endeavor. This methodology is widely used for scoping studies, especially in the social sciences. It has been updated and revised by various authors (Daudt et al. 2013; Pham et al. 2014) and replicated in numerous studies (O'Flaherty and Phillips 2015; Thompson et al. 2018; Cubbon et al. 2021; Tan et al. 2021; Machado et al. 2022; Mariappan et al. 2022; Ratshidi et al. 2022; Deleu et al. 2023; Linjean et al. 2025), including in the field of social entrepreneurship (Burga and Rezania 2015; Turpin and Shier 2019; Hudson et al. 2022; Lysaght et al. 2022; Nagle et al. 2023; Tohit et al. 2025). Arksey and O'Malley (2005) proposed five steps to follow in preparing a scoping review that guided the entire process of collecting and presenting data. They begin with the formulation of the question that guides the research, continue with the identification and selection of relevant articles for the proposed study, and end with the organization and presentation of the results. The following section describes the details of the integration of these methodological benchmarks into our research. For reporting the review process, we followed the PRISMA-ScR guideline—“Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews” (Tricco et al. 2018).

2.1. Identifying the Research Question

This study starts with the following general research question:

RQ: *What is known from the literature about SEIs that support people with ASD?*

To better guide the research process, two specific questions were formulated, derived from the general question:

- Q1. *Which dimensions of social entrepreneurial interventions aimed at people with ASD are known in the literature?*
- Q2. *What are the outcomes of SEIs that support people with ASD, as highlighted by research in the field?*

2.2. Identifying Relevant Articles

At this stage, we selected key concepts and terms related to SEIs and their forms of implementation. Considering the fact that “the terms social entrepreneurship, social business, and SE tend to overlap because all of them refer to initiatives which have the explicit aim to generate social value” (Testi et al. 2018, p. 400), we focused on the following key concepts: “social entrepreneurship”, “social enterprise”, “social business” and “social venture”. Regarding ASD, we took the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) as a reference. This manual integrates ASD into the category of “neurodevelopmental disorders” and brings together under the concept of ASD “disorders previously referred to as early infantile autism, childhood autism, Kanner’s autism, high-functioning autism, atypical autism, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified, childhood disintegrative disorder, and Asperger’s disorder” (American Psychiatric Association 2013, 2022). Accordingly, we selected more comprehensive terms, including “autism spectrum disorder”, “autistic individuals”, “developmental disorder” and “developmental disability”, using the symbol “*” for databases to capture the variations of the key terms. Boolean operators (OR/AND) were applied to combine the key terms, resulting in the following strategy for searching databases:

All fields (selected from databases): “social entrepreneur*” OR “social business” OR “social venture” OR “social enterprise*” AND “autis*” OR “developmental dis*”

Three important electronic databases were selected for the theme analyzed: Web of Science Core Collection, Scopus and ProQuest. In choosing them, we took into account the criteria used by studies published in the field of social sciences with a scoping review focus, such as Deleu et al. (2023), which highlighted that Scopus and ProQuest are “databases concentrated on social sciences”. Web of Science offers an overview, covering “all scientific disciplines”. This benchmark is important in the context of our intention to review articles published in journals within the area of social sciences, without missing the opportunity to integrate the data obtained into a broader context offered by journals published in interdisciplinary domains. We also extended our searches with Google Scholar to obtain a greater variety of perspectives on the research topic.

A series of *inclusion* and *exclusion criteria* were applied to refine the results. The *included* papers were limited to peer-reviewed journals and articles in English. Papers published in a language other than English, from non-peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, conference papers and editorial notes, were *excluded*. No limitations were applied regarding the year of publication, in order to have a more comprehensive study. The database research was completed on 26 September 2025.

While for the first three databases, the screening covered all articles that met the inclusion criteria, for Google Scholar we limited the searches to the first 140 records. The decision was taken because, as the other authors emphasized (Pham et al. 2014; Hudson et al. 2022), and our experience showed, there is little chance that it would still be possible to identify relevant articles after a certain number of results (usually 100 titles).

2.3. Article Selection

The use of key terms and the application of selection filters led to a result of 1109 titles from the first three databases, plus 140 items identified through the Google Scholar platform. From each database, lists of titles were extracted in Excel format and merged into a single document to identify duplicates. In the case of Google Scholar, titles were screened in accordance with eligibility criteria before being exported to Excel.

Following the PRISMA guidelines, we carried out the identification and elimination of duplicates, then screened the articles and removed those that did not meet certain criteria. The entire process of selecting articles is illustrated in Figure 1. The reasons for excluding certain papers from the review include the following: theoretical articles without references to empirical evidence of SEIs; articles describing SEIs for which people with ASD are not explicitly presented as a category of beneficiaries; insufficient or unclear data for the research topic.

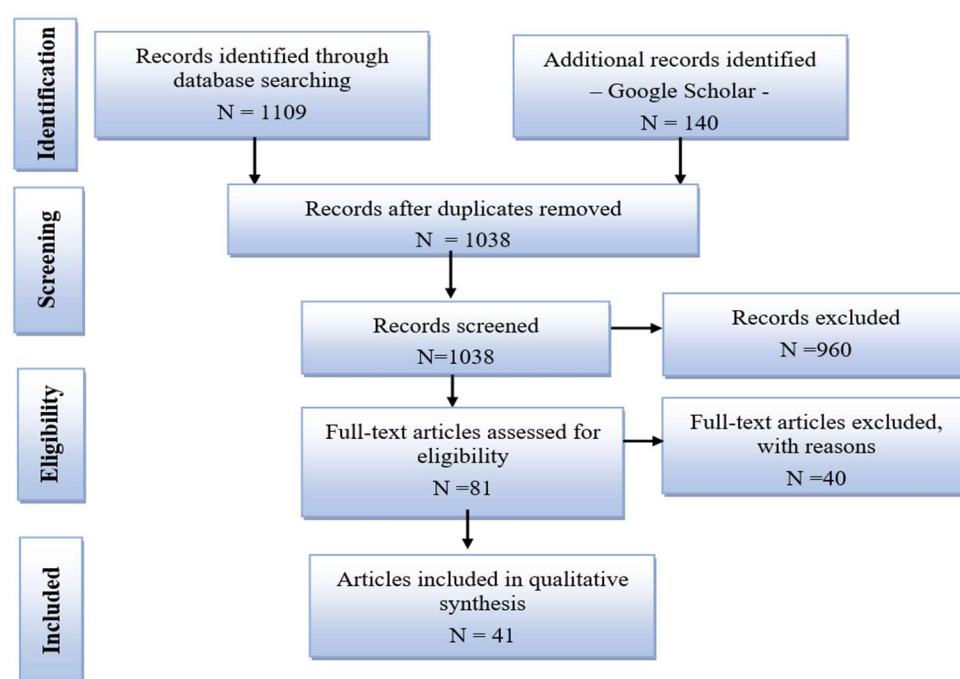


Figure 1. PRISMA research design.

2.4. Charting the Data

The main data obtained from the review of the articles included in the qualitative analysis were organized in a “data charting form”, which recorded information on the SEIs identified and provided a brief description of them, the country in which they were launched, the categories of beneficiaries they targeted, and details regarding the articles presenting these SEIs, including authors and year of publication. A summary of this data is presented in Table A1.

2.5. Summarizing and Reporting the Results

In order to answer the research questions, we synthesized information from each article regarding the specifics of the interventions and the results of the SEIs, where these were evaluated, while paying attention to the research methods used by the authors. All these aspects are discussed in the next section.

3. Results

This scoping review includes 41 articles published between 2008 and 2025 in various journals. Of these, five appeared in the *Social Enterprise Journal*, three in *Voluntas*, two in

Nonprofit Management and Leadership, two in *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy*, and the remaining 21 articles are published in other different journals. This heterogeneity of resources makes a valuable contribution to our analysis.

The SEIs described in the papers included in this review come from different areas of the globe, including Europe, North America, Asia, Africa and Australia. The most numerous initiatives analyzed come from the USA, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (see Table A1).

The results of our study highlight various characteristics of SEIs supporting people with ASD, with a predominant focus on the socio-professional inclusion of adults and an emphasis on leveraging their skills in the IT field. Most of the articles describe initiatives materialized through the establishment of SEs. They address various issues of people with ASD (from early diagnosis to providing care adapted to needs) and are aimed at different age groups.

Further, we will analyze the specifics of these social entrepreneurial interventions and highlight the outcomes they provide.

3.1. Social Entrepreneurial Interventions Aimed at People with ASD

Various dimensions of the interventions were captured (see Figure 2).

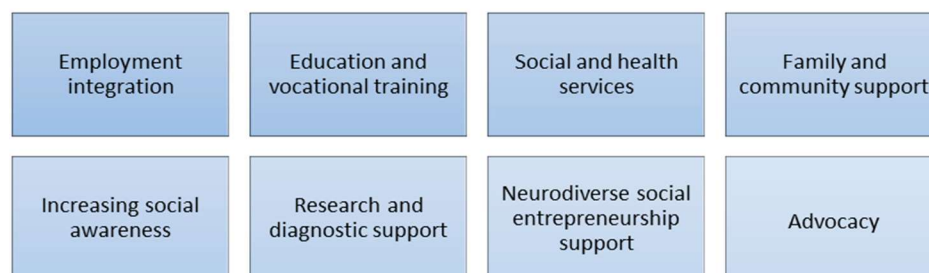


Figure 2. Dimensions of interventions.

3.1.1. Employment Integration

According to the results of our study, most SEIs address the issue of unemployment among adults with ASD. In total, 30 out of 41 articles mention at least one such initiative, implemented through the creation of jobs within an SE or by facilitating access to the broader labor market (see Table A1). Certainly, most business models include more complex intervention strategies that combine job offers with professional training and coaching to enhance the employment chances for the target group.

The most frequently mentioned initiative, described for its innovative approach to leveraging the IT skills of persons with ASD, was implemented through the establishment of an SE in Denmark (*Specialstern*) and represents the first visible initiative in the literature (Wareham and Sonne 2008; Öztürk 2014; Hockerts 2015; Wolf and Mair 2019; Mauksch and Dey 2023; Lechterman and Mair 2024). Another SE, established in the UK (*Auticon*), presents a similar approach to harnessing the skills of young people with ASD in the IT field (Choi et al. 2020; Wolf and Mair 2019). Four other articles present SEIs focused on facilitating employment in the IT field for people with ASD: SE—*ITvitae* established in the Netherlands (Schuurmans et al. 2023), SE—*Aspiritech* from the USA (Gidron 2014), along with other SEIs implemented in Canada (Nicholas and Lau 2019) and the USA (Ballesteros-Sola et al. 2018). Another 19 articles mention SEIs that have contributed to the integration of people with ASD into the labor market (Owen et al. 2015; Moody et al. 2015; Colenbrander et al. 2017; English et al. 2017; Ouimette and Rammler 2017; Praszkie et al. 2017; Krátki and Szabó 2018; Backer 2019; Bonar and Karlsson 2019; Magomedova and Bastida-Vialcanet

2019; Choi et al. 2020; Csángó 2020; Meqdadi et al. 2020; Ávila et al. 2021; Kiss et al. 2021; Lipták et al. 2022; Kamaludin 2023; Hunt 2025; Widagdo et al. 2025).

3.1.2. Education and Vocational Training

Educational support for people with ASD is provided for various age stages. It starts with the support provided during childhood in terms of language development through adapted educational materials (Shpykuliak et al. 2024), continues with the support offered for integration into the school environment (Ávila et al. 2021; Hunt 2025) and ends with vocational training courses that increase the ability to meet labor market demands (Correia et al. 2025), sometimes complemented by courses that help develop autonomy in everyday life (Krátki and Szabó 2018).

3.1.3. Social and Health Services

The provision of social and health services is carried out either integrated with other types of activities (Kiss et al. 2021) or through distinct units that support the development of autonomy in people with ASD (Kao and Huang 2015). Certain initiatives focus on offering therapeutic programs and products for the target group (Kidd et al. 2016).

3.1.4. Family and Community Support

Some SEIs include indirect services for people with ASD in the form of support provided to their families remotely through telephone lines (Nouman and Cnaan 2021, 2022) or to the communities to which people with this disorder belong (Ávila et al. 2021), contributing to enhanced social integration.

3.1.5. Increasing Social Awareness

Certain SEIs pay increased attention to raising awareness among the general public about autism. For instance, the *Symbiosis Foundation* from Hungary includes “a wide range of social awareness-raising activities: providing national and international (EVS) volunteer service, public forums, street campaigns, classroom lessons and interactive integration programs with the involvement of the target group” (Lipták et al. 2022). Also, an advertising agency from Thailand launched activities aimed at disseminating information and raising public awareness about children with ASD (Natakun and Teerapong 2014), thus contributing to enhancing awareness of this disorder.

3.1.6. Research and Diagnostic Support

An article (Pepin 2021) presents the initiative of a British foundation supporting autism research, which, although not part of a formalized framework specific to SEs, uses the principles of social entrepreneurship to achieve social impact. This approach has enabled the support of important medical research projects in the field of ASD. Another article presents the initiative of a Polish foundation (*Synapsis Foundation*), which has SE status and has responded to the need for early diagnosis among children with ASD (Praszkier et al. 2017). Through its work, the foundation has supported the target group at all stages of diagnosis.

3.1.7. Neurodiverse Social Entrepreneurship Support

A paper by Zivkovic (2024), a social entrepreneur with autism, emphasizes the importance of adequate support for this form of entrepreneurship to mitigate unemployment among people with ASD. The author recalls her own experience in developing an SE that provides training programs for this category of beneficiaries and highlights the key elements that can contribute to strengthening the support ecosystem.

3.1.8. Advocacy

Among the articles analyzed, the voice of Thorkil Sonne, founder of the Specialisterne Company and parent of a young man with autism, stands out as he establishes the mission of his social business “to change the predominant view of ASD as a disorder; a language that is «off» and should somehow be «cured» back to normalcy” (Wareham and Sonne 2008). His influence seems to be quite strong, as there is an increase in the number of SEs with a similar approach and even a change in perspective regarding the contribution of people with ASD to society.

In summary, we find a predominant focus in the literature on the analysis of SEIs that support the socio-professional integration of people with ASD by establishing SEs that provide training, jobs, or facilitate access to employment. The IT sector is the most frequently mentioned field of activity, being seen as an opportunity to harness the special skills of these beneficiaries.

3.2. Outcomes

The evaluation of SEs’ results is heterogeneous and relatively fragmented. While we identified only 2 articles (Owen et al. 2015; Correia et al. 2025) that primarily aim to assess the impact of SEIs on beneficiaries, another 6 articles (Moody et al. 2015; Cheah and Ho 2019; Nicholas and Lau 2019; Kamaludin 2023; Schuurmans et al. 2023, 2024) present results that emerged as a secondary research dimension. The research methodology is predominantly qualitative (7 studies are based on a qualitative approach and only one article uses quantitative methods), as can be seen in Table 1. The focus is mainly on short-term outcomes, and only one article provides data on long-term results (Schuurmans et al. 2024).

Table 1. Methodological approach employed in assessing SE outcomes.

Reference	Study Design/Data Collection	Sample
Moody et al. (2015)	Case study—interviews and secondary data	22 stakeholders
Owen et al. (2015)	Qualitative research (interview and focus group)	4 beneficiaries (interview); 5 parents (interview); 5 beneficiaries (1 focus group)
Cheah and Ho (2019)	Case study—interviews and secondary data	Company cofounders
Nicholas and Lau (2019)	Case study—interviews	4 beneficiaries; 9 employers; 3 employment support personnel
Kamaludin (2023)	Case study—interviews and secondary data	2 founders of SEs
Schuurmans et al. (2023)	Qualitative research (interview and focus group)	22 stakeholders (parents, students, employees, former students and a labor expert)
Schuurmans et al. (2024)	Qualitative research (interview)	16 members of the organization’s management
Correia et al. (2025)	Case study—questionnaires and secondary data	55 beneficiaries

- *Implications for beneficiaries (persons with ASD)*

3.2.1. Improving Skills and Employment Prospects

Four studies included in the review (Owen et al. 2015; Nicholas and Lau 2019; Schuurmans et al. 2023; Correia et al. 2025) present evidence of the positive effects of the support provided by SEs on beneficiaries' confidence in their own professional abilities. Other effects associated with perceived support include "decreased sense of isolation and less uncertainty" and "decreased stress at times of uncertainty or other job-related difficulty" (Nicholas and Lau 2019, p. 198).

One of the articles (Schuurmans et al. 2023) shows an increase in the employment chances of beneficiaries following participation in SE programs. Approximately 92% of beneficiaries who took part in enterprise programs obtained a job shortly after completion. Moreover, most beneficiaries signed contracts for at least 32 h per week and a competitive salary. Another study (Schuurmans et al. 2024) in which two of the authors from the previous article were also involved, shows that although the employment rate is significant, the retention of these employees in the organizations where they were placed is influenced by the motivation of employers and the attention they pay to the abilities of people with ASD. This research captures the long-term effects of placing people with autism in organizations and is based on the results of interviews conducted with 16 people in leadership positions in the organizations. Study findings indicate that "companies prioritizing technical proficiency and actively seeking out autistic individuals for their unique abilities are more likely to establish a mutually beneficial scenario that enhances both employment opportunities and retention rates. Conversely, employers primarily driven by altruistic motives may unintentionally create impediments to employing and retaining autistic employees. In workplaces where meeting quotas supersedes other considerations in hiring practices, staff have witnessed injustices that are likely to undermine the establishment of a safe and inclusive work environment" (p. 12).

3.2.2. Enhancing the Quality of Life

One of the studies (Owen et al. 2015) presents results that highlight a positive impact of the social entrepreneurial strategy on the quality of life of beneficiaries. To measure quality of life, the authors of the study focus on three key factors: *independence*, *social participation*, and *well-being*. Regarding independence, an increase in "independence in travel and engagement in life choices" (p. 218) was identified. With respect to social participation, the following were noted: "developing new friendships within the enterprises", "initiating social activities outside of work" and "awareness of personal rights" (p. 219). In terms of well-being, the results show "increased pride in accomplishment, empowerment", "motivation, happiness, and selfexpression", but also, for some beneficiaries, "improved health, such as weight loss and increased activity" and "the pride associated with having an income" (p. 219).

Similar results can be observed in the case of a quantitative study (Correia et al. 2025). Beneficiaries reported "an increase in their level of happiness", "improvements in autonomy", "physical health", "more friends", "enhancement of social skills", and "heightened sense of purpose", while their parents mentioned that "children were happier", "showed better interactions within the family" and "coped better with changes".

Other outcomes reported in the literature include fewer clinical visits, social cohesion, less clinical care, and lower medication dosages (Moody et al. 2015).

- *Impact on family members*

A study (Owen et al. 2015) showed effects on the emotional well-being of family members by reducing stress, as it was no longer necessary to adjust the program once the person with ASD was involved in SE activities. For one of the respondents, effects on physical well-being were also highlighted as a result of stress reduction. Another study

(Correia et al. 2025) reported the positive impact perceived by parents regarding free time, as well as the fact that they “felt more at ease at their children’s future” and experienced a decrease in financial concerns.

- *Social impact*

One of the articles (Cheah and Ho 2019) underlines the important social impact created by an SE “with a range of therapeutic products for individuals with autism, stress or anxiety” due to their innovative nature. “Within the first year, Tware engaged more than twenty special needs schools, therapy centers and homes in Singapore, while their products had supported at least 600 beneficiaries and caregivers worldwide. By 2016, 1000 units were sold, with approximately half the buyers from Singapore and the remaining from over seven countries and territories, including Australia, Japan, Germany and Taiwan” (pp. 519–20).

- *Social Return on Investment (SROI)*

Three of the articles included in the review present evidence of SROI. One of the studies (Owen et al. 2015) evaluated the results and impact of a social entrepreneurship program over a calendar year, reaching a ratio of 1.77:1. This means that for every dollar of resources invested by the enterprise to support beneficiaries, the return was 1.77 USD. According to the authors’ conclusions, being an NGO, “any value over zero demonstrates added value” (p. 224). Another qualitative study (Kamaludin 2023) highlights the SROI for 2 calendar years as USD 2.65 and 2.16 per dollar invested. A higher ratio between the value of the investment and the result obtained was emphasized by a third study (Correia et al. 2025), where a return of 4.02 euros for each euro invested was estimated.

3.2.3. Identified Gaps in the Literature

There is limited research focused on assessing the outcomes of SEs supporting persons with ASD. Moreover, this review reveals a paucity of studies based on quantitative or mixed approaches and oriented towards analyzing the long-term impact on SE beneficiaries.

4. Discussion

The present study sought to identify the characteristics of SEIs that address the needs of individuals with ASD and to synthesize the results of research analyzing their outcomes. Although we have 41 articles included in the final stage of review, only 8 articles focus on SEs’ effects, of which only 2 have as their main purpose the evaluation of SEs’ outcomes, and another 6 highlight these results as a secondary dimension of the research. The results of these analyses are based on predominantly qualitative research methods, with impact measurement mainly in the short term and a narrow, fragmented framework for data presentation (except for the first 2 articles mentioned), highlighting important gaps in this field.

The limitations regarding the assessment of the impact of SE are discussed by some authors (Moody et al. 2015; Owen et al. 2015) through the challenges that some entrepreneurs experience in carrying out such analyses, mainly caused by the lack of standardized methods and limited guidance (Mulloth and Rumi 2022). These issues have considerable implications for research in the field of social entrepreneurship. The findings align with observations in recent literature in the area of social entrepreneurship, which emphasize important challenges in measuring the impact of SEs associated with the complexity of the social problems addressed, the lack of standardized indicators and “considerations of long-term impact” (Ćwiklicki et al. 2025, p. 161).

The fact that this study managed to map initiatives launched across 5 continents and analyze papers published in 25 different journals provides a comprehensive overview of the topic. However, like any research, this study has some limitations.

4.1. Research Limitations

The study does not include a contextualized analysis of SEIs that takes into account the cultural particularities of the development of these initiatives or the legal regulations of the states in which the interventions were carried out. Given that the reviewed articles describe initiatives targeting people with ASD that resulted in the establishment of an SE, we did not carry out additional analyses to verify whether the classification complies with the legal regulations of the state in which it operates. The present study did not analyze the evolution of mapped SEIs beyond the reviewed literature. If some SEIs resulted in the establishment of SEs that are currently no longer active, they were not excluded from the analysis, as the intention was to illustrate the specificity of social entrepreneurial interventions addressed to people with ASD.

4.2. Research Recommendations

Even though research in the field of social entrepreneurship has increased in recent years, we still notice challenges in analyzing an important dimension for SEs represented by the measurement of social impact. The results of our study underscore the need to initiate and conduct rigorous studies based on quantitative methods or mixed approaches to shed light on the effects of SEIs on the quality of life of people with ASD. The few available studies indicate positive effects of SEs on beneficiaries' quality of life, but assessing long-term impact is also important, with longitudinal studies needed to capture their long-term contribution to the social inclusion of people with ASD. Moreover, an impact assessment that takes into account elements such as "inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact" (Esposito et al. 2021, p. 16) would enable a deeper understanding of the social value created.

5. Conclusions

This paper brings attention to the *diversity of SEIs* that respond to the needs of people with ASD, emphasizing the complexity of the *interventions* and the depth of *effects generated at the individual, family and community levels*.

The results of our study capture distinctive features of SEIs focused on individuals with ASD. *Social entrepreneurial interventions* predominantly focused on supporting the socio-professional inclusion of adults with ASD were identified, with particular attention in many SEs to leveraging the special skills of people with ASD in the IT field. Other types of interventions observed cover the areas of socio-educational inclusion, ASD research and diagnosis, social and health services, family and community support, increasing public awareness and neurodiverse social entrepreneurship support.

Regarding the *outcomes of SEs* aimed at people with ASD, the articles reviewed indicate positive effects associated with a favorable impact on the beneficiaries' quality of life and improvement in adults' perception of their own abilities to find and maintain a job. However, the available studies are few and limited to short-term effects, pointing to a significant need to expand research to capture long-term effects.

Despite the persistent gaps identified in the current literature regarding the assessment of the contribution of SEIs to the medium and long-term well-being of people with ASD, the present work makes a contribution by providing an overview of the characteristics of SEIs that support the social inclusion of persons with ASD and underlines the challenges existent in the assessment of social outcomes. The study also has the potential to guide policies in the field, given that the educational and professional integration of these beneficiaries

is a constant concern for institutions that strive to comply with the provisions of the “Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities”.

The main recommendations arising from the current research focus on supporting social entrepreneurs in identifying and using tools to measure the impact of SEs on beneficiaries. Evidence of the impact created can guide the activities carried out, provide a real picture of the efficiency of the entrepreneurial strategy used and strengthen the motivation of those involved in the SEs’ social mission.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created for the scoping review.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

ASD	Autism spectrum disorder
SE	Social enterprise
SEI	Social entrepreneurial initiative

Appendix A

Table A1. Overview of the SEIs identified through literature review.

Type of SEI	Main Aim/Description	Target Group	Country *	Reference
SE	Providing meaningful <i>employment</i> to adults with ASD.	Adults with ASD	Australia	English et al. (2017)
SE	Offering training programs for supporting and advising “autistic social entrepreneurs”.	Adults with ASD	Australia	Zivkovic (2024)
SE	Supporting “ <i>employment in the information technology (IT) sector</i> for autistic adults”.	Adults with ASD	Canada	Nicholas and Lau (2019)
Cooperative (Common Ground Co-operative)	Providing training, administrative, and job coach support to SEs for which persons with developmental disabilities are non-share-capital partners.	Adults with ASD, Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities	Canada	Owen et al. (2015)
SE (Specialstern)	Hiring people with autism to work in software testing and focusing on leveraging the special abilities of individuals with ASD.	People with ASD	Denmark	Wareham and Sonne (2008) ; Öztürk (2014) ; Hockerts (2015) ; Mauksch and Dey (2023) ; Lechterman and Mair (2024)
Organization founded by Ashoka Fellow (Advance)	Offering <i>therapeutic program</i> focusing on cognitive and skill development, including “speech and language therapy and psychomotor therapy”.	Children and adolescents with ASD	Egypt	Kidd et al. (2016)

Table A1. Cont.

Type of SEI	Main Aim/Description	Target Group	Country *	Reference
SE (Kockacsoki)	Providing a complex portfolio of supporting services to people with autism (coaching courses to learn how to become more self-sufficient in daily life, opportunities to gain <i>work</i> experience through trainee programs and to obtain permanent employment).	Adolescents and adults with ASD	Hungary	Krátki and Szabó (2018); Csángó (2020)
SE	Offering employment, social and health services for the target group.	People with intellectual disabilities and ASD	Hungary	Kiss et al. (2021)
SE (Symbiosis Foundation)	Supporting the life processes of target group through job creation, vocational training, and social awareness-raising activities.	People with ASD and intellectual disabilities (the main group)	Hungary	Lipták et al. (2022)
SE	Developing a culturally adapted hotline to support families with children with ASD.	Children with ASD and their families	Israel	Nouman and Cnaan (2021, 2022)
SE (GOLD)	Providing “adaptive <i>vocational training</i> , defining meaningful social roles, and creating multi-stakeholder partnerships”.	Young people with learning disabilities, including ASD	Malaysia	Widagdo et al. (2025)
SE (ITvitae)	Facilitating <i>employment</i> of individuals with ASD in the IT sector through specialized training.	People with ASD and average to high intelligence	The Netherlands	Schuurmans et al. (2023, 2024)
WISE (AutiTalent)	Supporting target group to find suitable <i>employment</i> (hiring and seconding, performing recruitment activities on behalf of third parties, guiding people who are already employed).	People with ASD	The Netherlands	Colenbrander et al. (2017)
SE	Supporting <i>employment</i> for people with autism.	People with ASD	The Netherlands	Backer (2019)
SE/social farm (CareFarm Paradijs)	Therapeutic farming enterprise providing employment, educational programs, and supervised physical activities for individuals with autism.	Seniors and youth with ASD	The Netherlands	Moody et al. (2015)
SE	Providing “meaningful work” for people with ASD.	People with ASD	Norway	Hunt (2025)
SE (Synopsis Foundation)	Organizing “workshops for autistic adults to help them obtain <i>work</i> and support themselves by producing high-quality, saleable merchandise”. Supporting the <i>diagnosis</i> and care of children with autism.	Children and adults with ASD	Poland	Praszkier et al. (2017)
SE	Offering an <i>employability</i> program (“employment opportunities and job training”) and <i>school-community</i> program (sessions for school communities and other people who have contact with the target group).	People with Asperger’s syndrome (over the age of 16)	Portugal	Ávila et al. (2021)
SE	Encouraging “the active participation of children, young people and adults with ASD and their families in society, ensuring a better quality of life and well-being”.	Children, adults with ASD and their families	Portugal	Correia et al. (2025)

Table A1. Cont.

Type of SEI	Main Aim/Description	Target Group	Country *	Reference
SE (Tware)	A wearable technology startup offering “a range of <i>therapeutic products</i> for individuals with autism, stress or anxiety”.	Individuals with ASD and related conditions	Singapore	Cheah and Ho (2019)
SE/Ceramic studio SE/Café	Offering “workshops, project support, and facility <i>hire</i> supporting autistic adults in the community”. Offering workplace experience for target group and support to build up their <i>confidence</i>	Adults with ASD	Scotland	Bonar and Karlsson (2019)
Design studio (<i>La Casa de Carlota</i>)	Employs and “integrates people with intellectual disabilities, such as Down’s syndrome or autism, and a great artistic talent, into its creative team”.	People with ASD or Down’s syndrome	Spain	Magomedova and Bastida-Vialcanet (2019)
Foundation	Providing a <i>residential home</i> for people with autism (where <i>vocational training</i> and development of <i>independent skills</i> are also provided), while receiving tourists as a source of income.	Children and adults with ASD	Taiwan	Kao and Huang (2015)
SE/adverting agency	Focusing on socially conscious design and raising <i>awareness</i> and providing information to the general public about the plight of autistic children.	Children with ASD	Thailand	Natakun and Teerapong (2014)
Startup	<i>Offering a digital educational platform</i> with free games for children with autism, Down syndrome, and special education needs.	Children with ASD and Down Syndrome	Turkey	Avci and Ardiç (2024)
SE	Developing “books and games for the development of speech in people with autism and speech disorders”.	People with ASD and speech disorders	Ukraine	Shpykuliak et al. (2024)
SE	Focusing on “ <i>education and employment</i> for people with autism”.	People with ASD	UK	Meqdadi et al. (2020)
Foundation	Supporting “pioneering projects with strategic impact in the field of autism” with particular emphasis on <i>medical research</i> .	Children and adults with ASD	UK	Pepin (2021)
SE (Auticon)	“Creating an autism-positive work environment and providing autistic people with long-term careers and the ability to serve corporate clients”; Leveraging the strengths of people with autism in the field of IT.	People with ASD	UK	Wolf and Mair (2019)
SE (<i>Blue Star Recyclers</i>)	Created and provided jobs for people with autism and other disabilities.	People with ASD and other disabilities	USA	Choi et al. (2020)
SE	Offering customized employment.	People with ASD	USA	Ouimette and Rammler (2017)
Limited liability company (<i>Coding Autism</i>)	Empowering individuals with autism to obtain <i>meaningful employment</i> , <i>providing</i> coaching and vocational training in software coding and engineering for adults with ASD.	Adults with ASD	USA	Ballesteros-Sola et al. (2018)

Table A1. Cont.

Type of SEI	Main Aim/Description	Target Group	Country *	Reference
SE (Aspiretech)	Providing <i>employment</i> opportunities for high-functioning individuals with ASD by leveraging their strengths in attention to detail and technology skills, particularly in software testing and quality assurance.	High-functioning individuals with ASD	USA	Gidron (2014)
SE	Providing “ethical electronic recycling as a way to <i>create local jobs</i> ” for target group.	People with ASD	USA	Kamaludin (2023)

* The place where the SEI was launched.

References

- Alborno, Nadera, and Ghina Kalaji. 2024. Social entrepreneurship–inclusive disability employment in the UAE. *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities* 70: 1044–55. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- American Psychiatric Association. 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR)*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- American Psychiatric Association. 2022. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR™) (Text Revision)*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Andersen, Linda Lundgaard, Malin Gawell, and Roger Spear. 2016. Social entrepreneurship and social enterprises in the Nordics: Narratives emerging from social movements and welfare dynamics. In *Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprises*. Edited by Linda Lundgaard Andersen, Malin Gawell and Roger Spear. London: Routledge, pp. 1–21. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Arksey, Hilary, and Lisa O'Malley. 2005. Scoping studies: Towards a methodological framework. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 8: 19–32. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Avci, Murat, and Kadir Ardiç. 2024. Psychometric properties of the Turkish version of the entrepreneurs' social identity scale. *Ege Academic Review* 24: 607–20. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Ávila, Liliana, Luís Miguel D. F. Ferreira, and Marlene Amorim. 2021. What is different about social enterprises' operational practices and capabilities? *Operations Management Research* 14: 318–36. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Backer, Joost Willem. 2019. Understanding social enterprise in The Netherlands. *Social Enterprise Journal* 16: 18–45. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Ballesteros-Sola, Maria, Morgan Stickney, and Yvette Trejo. 2018. To B or not to B? The journey of “coding autism” toward the B corp certification. *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy* 1: 194–204. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Barba-Sánchez, Virginia, Yolanda Salinero, Pedro Jiménez Estévez, and Pablo Ruiz-Palomino. 2024. How entrepreneurship drives life satisfaction among people with intellectual disabilities (PwID): A mixed-method approach. *Management Decision* 62: 426–49. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Barneveld, Petra S., Hanna Swaab, Selene Fagel, Herman Van Engeland, and Leo M. J. de Sonnevile. 2014. Quality of life: A case-controlled long-term follow-up study, comparing young high-functioning adults with autism spectrum disorders with adults with other psychiatric disorders diagnosed in childhood. *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 55: 302–10. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Bertelli, Marco O., Annamaria Bianco, Veronica Boniotti, and Eddie Chaplin. 2025. Definition, Diagnosis, and Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder. In *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Disability*. Edited by Gabriel Bennett and Emma Goodall. Cham: Springer Nature, pp. 1–15. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Bonar, Indiana, and Paula Sonja Karlsson. 2019. Marketing Scottish social enterprises using a label? *Social Enterprise Journal* 15: 339–57. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Bornstein, David, and Susan Davis. 2010. *Social Entrepreneurship: What Everyone Needs to Know.*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burga, Ruben, and Davar Rezaia. 2015. A scoping review of accountability in social entrepreneurship. *Sage Open* 5: 1–10. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Cheah, Sarah, and Yuen-Ping Ho. 2019. Building the ecosystem for social entrepreneurship: University social enterprise cases in Singapore. *Science, Technology and Society* 24: 507–26. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Choi, Donwe, Frances Stokes Berry, and Adela Ghadimi. 2020. Policy design and achieving social outcomes: A comparative analysis of social enterprise policy. *Public Administration Review* 80: 494–505. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Colenbrander, Aalt, Aikaterini Argyrou, Tineke Lambooy, and Robert J. Blomme. 2017. Inclusive governance in social enterprises in The Netherlands—A case study. *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics* 88: 543–66. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Correia, Rita, Fernando Barbosa, Jorge Cunha, and Alaize Dall-Orsoletta. 2025. The socio-professional integration of neurodivergent people and its social value: A case study in Portugal. *Social Enterprise Journal* 22: 1–20. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

- Csángó, Dániel. 2020. Social entrepreneurship in the context of business and disability studies. *Hungarian Journal of Disability Studies & Special Education* 6: 120–42. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Cubbon, Lauren, Kristin Darga, Uira Duarte Wisnesky, Liz Dennett, and Christine Guptill. 2021. Depression among entrepreneurs: A scoping review. *Small Business Economics* 57: 781–805. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Ćwiklicki, Marek, Andrea Bassi, and Audrone Urmanaviciene. 2025. Guest editorial: Challenges and limitations of social impact measurement in social and solidarity economy. *Social Enterprise Journal* 21: 161–65. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Daudt, Helena M.L., Catherine Van Mossel, and Samantha J. Scott. 2013. Enhancing the scoping study methodology: A large, inter-professional team's experience with Arksey and O'Malley's framework. *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 13: 48. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Deleu, Harm, Mieke Schrooten, and Koen Hermans. 2023. Hidden homelessness: A scoping review and avenues for further inquiry. *Social Policy and Society* 22: 282–98. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Dennis, Megan, Claire Henderson-Wilson, Joanne Watson, and Justin T. Lawson. 2024. Nature-based interventions for adults with developmental disabilities: A scoping review centering autistic adults. *Sustainability* 16: 1077. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- English, Derek L., Sadhana Gounden, Richard E. Dagher, Shu Fen Chan, Brett E. Furlonger, Angelika Anderson, and Dennis W. Moore. 2017. Effects of video modeling with video feedback on vocational skills of adults with autism spectrum disorder. *Developmental Neurorehabilitation* 20: 511–24. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Esposito, Paolo, Valerio Brescia, Chiara Fantauzzi, and Rocco Frondizi. 2021. Understanding social impact and value creation in hybrid organizations: The case of Italian civil service. *Sustainability* 13: 4058. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Fernández-Guadagno, Josefina, and Raquel Montes Diez. 2024. Social entrepreneurship impact in ten EU countries with supportive regulations. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy* 15: 10781–98. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Gawell, Malin. 2013. Social entrepreneurship—innovative challengers or adjustable followers? *Social Enterprise Journal* 9: 203–20. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Gidron, Benjamin. 2014. Market-oriented social enterprises employing people with disabilities: A participants' perspective. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship* 5: 60–76. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Hockerts, Kai. 2015. How hybrid organizations turn antagonistic assets into complementarities. *California Management Review* 57: 83–106. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Hudson, Sara, Dennis Foley, and Margaret Cargo. 2022. Indigenous social enterprises and health and wellbeing: A scoping review and conceptual framework. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19: 14478. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Hunt, Sophie. 2025. Exploring social innovation through hybridity: The case of a Norwegian social enterprise. *Social Enterprise Journal* 21: 651–67. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Kamaludin, Mohammed Faiz. 2023. Social sustainability within social entrepreneurship. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 192: 122541. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Kamaludin, Mohammed Faiz, Jesrina Ann Xavier, and Muslim Amin. 2024. Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainability: A Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship* 15: 26–49. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Kao, Ming-Rea, and Chang-Yu Huang. 2015. Competing identity: The role of family in social entrepreneurship. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 26: 1066–83. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Kidd, Sean A., Athena Madan, Susmitha Rallabandi, Donald C. Cole, Elisha Muskat, Shoba Raja, David Wiljer, David Aylward, and Kwame McKenzie. 2016. A multiple case study of mental health interventions in middle income countries: Considering the science of delivery. *PLoS ONE* 11: e0152083. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Kim, Cheol Young. 2024. Social entrepreneurship, employment, and financial performance: A latent growth modeling approach. *SAGE Open* 14: 21582440241249147. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Kiss, Julianna, Noémi Krátki, and Gábor Deme. 2021. Interaction between social enterprises and key actors shaping the field: Experiences from the social and health sectors in Hungary. *Social Enterprise Journal* 17: 625–46. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Kohli, Manu, Monica Juneja, Manushree Gupta, Arpan Kumar Kar, Smitha Sairam, Varun Ganjigunte Prakash, and Prathosh AP. 2025. Precision applied behavior analysis intervention for autism spectrum disorder using natural language processing and graph centrality. *Biomedical Signal Processing and Control* 110: 108034. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Krátki, Noémi, and Zsolt Roland Szabó. 2018. Social value creation and impact measurement—what do they mean exactly? *Theory, Methodology, Practice Review of Business and Management* 14: 15–25. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Lechterman, Theodore M., and Johanna Mair. 2024. Social enterprises as agents of social justice: A Rawlsian perspective on institutional capacity. *Organization Studies* 45: 1301–23. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Levac, Danielle, Heather Colquhoun, and Kelly K. O'Brien. 2010. Scoping studies: Advancing the methodology. *Implementation Science* 5: 69. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Linjean, Meschelle, Wooksoo Kim, Christopher St Vil, Robert M. Adelman, Marie A. Cannon, and Jacqueline Hall. 2025. Economic integration of refugees in the USA: A scoping review using the socio-ecological model (2007–2023). *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 2: 601–38. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

- Lipták, Katalin, Klára Szűcsné Markovics, Erika Horváthné Csolák, and Zoltán Musinszki. 2022. A successful social enterprise in Hungary. *Economic and Regional Studies/Studia Ekonomiczne i Regionalne* 15: 220–36. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Lysaght, Rosemary, Golnaz Ghaderi, Peter Milley, and Patrick R. Labelle. 2022. Best practices in evaluating work integration social enterprises for persons with intellectual disabilities: A scoping review. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities* 19: 431–40. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Lysaght, Rosemary, Kelley Packalen, Terry Krupa, Lori Ross, Agnieszka Fecica, Michael Roy, and Kathy Brock. 2024. Social enterprise as a pathway to work, wellness and social inclusion for Canadians with mental illnesses and/or substance-use disorders'. *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research* 15: 30–51. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Machado, Bárbara, Sónia Caridade, Isabel Araújo, and Paula Lobato Faria. 2022. Mapping the cyber interpersonal violence among young populations: A scoping review. *Social Sciences* 11: 207. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Magomedova, Nina, and Ramon Bastida-Vialcanet. 2019. La Casa de Carlota: A studio where diversity wins. *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy* 2: 350–62. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Mair, Johanna, and Ignasi Martí. 2006. Social entrepreneurship research: A source of explanation, prediction, and delight. *Journal of World Business* 41: 36–44. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Mariappan, Rajati, Kim Hua Tan, Jiaming Yang, Jian Chen, and Peng Kee Chang. 2022. Synthesizing the attributes of computer-based error analysis for ESL and EFL learning: A scoping review. *Sustainability* 14: 15649. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Mauksch, Stefanie, and Pascal Dey. 2023. Treating disability as an asset (not a limitation): A critical examination of disability inclusion through social entrepreneurship. *Organization* 31: 624–44. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- McCabe, Helen, and Guosheng Deng. 2018. "So they'll have somewhere to go": Establishing Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for children with autism in the People's Republic of China. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 29: 1019–32. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Medeleanu, Camelia Nicoleta. 2013. Social economy-a form of inclusion and of reactivating of labor in the context of the current crisis. *Revista de Economie Socială* 3: 89–101.
- Meqdadi, Osama, Thomas E. Johnsen, and Mark Pagell. 2020. Relationship configurations for procuring from social enterprises. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management* 40: 819–45. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Mitra, Jay. 2019. *Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Regional Development: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. Abingdon: Routledge. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Moody, Michael, Laura Littlepage, and Naveed Paydar. 2015. Measuring social return on investment: Lessons from organizational implementation of SROI in The Netherlands and the United States. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 26: 19–37. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Mulloth, Balashankar, and Stefano Rumi. 2022. Challenges to measuring social value creation through social impact assessments: The case of RVA Works. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development* 29: 528–49. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Nagle, Evija, Sanita Šuriņa, and Ingūna Griškēviča. 2023. Healthcare workers' moral distress during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A scoping review. *Social Sciences* 12: 371. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Natakun, Boonanan, and Khemmiga Teerapong. 2014. Social design enterprises in Thailand: Potentials and challenges. *Journal of Architectural/Planning Research and Studies (JARS)* 11: 119–36. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Nicholas, David B., and Ai-Men Lau. 2019. Employment support for autistic adults in the information technology sector: A case study of Meticulon Consulting Inc. *Autism in Adulthood* 1: 194–201. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Nouman, Hani, and Ram A. Cnaan. 2021. Toolbox recommendations for social workers to promote successful social entrepreneurship. *Social Work* 66: 317–28. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Nouman, Hani, and Ram A. Cnaan. 2022. Social entrepreneurship in social work: Opportunities for success. *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research* 13: 27–46. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Nuchian, Noufal, Ajithakumari Vijayappan Nair Biju, and Krishna Reddy. 2024. An investigation on social impact performance assessment of the social enterprises: Identification of an ideal social entrepreneurship model. *Business Strategy & Development* 7: E305. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- O'Flaherty, Jacqueline, and Craig Phillips. 2015. The use of flipped classrooms in higher education: A scoping review. *The Internet and Higher Education* 25: 85–95. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Ouimette, Michelle, and Linda H. Rammner. 2017. Entrepreneurship as a means to Employment First: How can it work? *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* 46: 333–39. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Owen, Frances, Jingyu Li, Lisa Whittingham, Jennifer Hope, Courtney Bishop, Anne Readhead, and Laurie Mook. 2015. Social return on investment of an innovative employment option for persons with developmental disabilities: Common Ground Co-operative. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 26: 209–28. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Öztürk, Fatih. 2014. A comparative social enterprise analysis: Motives, processes and barriers. *Studia i Materiały Wydział Zarządzania Uniwersytet Warszawski* 17: 86–97. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Pepin, John. 2021. Making the world a better place: Achieving impact through innovation and an entrepreneurial ethos. *Tizard Learning Disability Review* 26: 148–56. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

- Pham, Mai T., Andrijana Rajić, Judy D. Greig, Jan M. Sargeant, Andrew Papadopoulos, and Scott A. McEwen. 2014. A scoping review of scoping reviews: Advancing the approach and enhancing the consistency. *Research Synthesis Methods* 5: 371–85. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Praszquier, Ryszard, Ewa Petruszak, Marta Kacprzyk-Murawska, and Agata Zabłocka. 2017. The Polish social enterprise sector vis-à-vis the welfare regime: Following on the solidarity movement? *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 28: 2383–402. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Rakar, Tatjana, and Anja Uršič. 2025. The scope and potential of social enterprises in Slovenia. *Nonprofit Policy Forum*. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Ratshidi, Lilies, Sara Grobbelaar, and Adele Botha. 2022. Conceptualising the factors influencing community health workers' preparedness for ICT Implementation: A systematised scoping review. *Sustainability* 14: 8930. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Schuurmans, Jantje A., Elaine P. Wright, Joske G. F. Bunders-Aelen, and Barbara J. Regeer. 2024. Exploring autistic employment and retention realities: A qualitative study among 12 Dutch organizations. *Neurodiversity* 2: 1–26. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Schuurmans, Jantje A., Emma E. de Wit, and Joske G. F. Bunders-Aelen. 2023. Thinking differently works: Understanding the essential elements for the success of a competitive integrated employment program developed for persons with autism spectrum conditions. *Consulting Psychology Journal* 75: 369–90. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Seçer, İsmail, Fatmanur Çimen, Sümeyye Ulaş, Eda Tatlı, Feyzanur Saatçı, and Abdurrahman Pakiş. 2025. Autism traits and mental well-being: The mediating role of social camouflaging and the moderating role of social exclusion and public stigma. *Scientific Reports* 15: 36633. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Shpykuliak, Oleksandr, Diana Shelenko, Ivan Balaniuk, Anna Diuk, Hennadii Mazur, Sergiy Balaniuk, and Andrii Boichuk. 2024. Social entrepreneurship in providing employment: The experience of Poland and Ukraine. *Journal of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University* 11: 70–83. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Tan, Kim Hua, Poh Phui Chan, and Nur-Ehsan Mohd Said. 2021. Higher education students' online instruction perceptions: A quality virtual learning environment. *Sustainability* 13: 10840. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Testi, Enrico, Mario Biggeri, Marco Bellucci, During Roel, and H. Thomas R. Persson, eds. 2018. An introduction to social entrepreneurship in Europe. In *Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation*. London: Routledge, pp. 1–12. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Thompson, Genevieve, Chloe Lyn Shindruk, Adebisola Abiodun Adekoya, Lisa Demczuk, and Susan McClement. 2018. Meanings of 'centredness' in long-term care facilities: A scoping review protocol. *BMJ Open* 8: E022498. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Tohit, Nor Faiza Mohd, Siti Athirah Zafirah Abd Rashid, Nur Adnin Ahmad Zaidi, and Mainul Haque. 2025. Social entrepreneurship initiatives addressing period poverty: Mapping strategies and outcomes. *Bangladesh Journal of Medical Science* 24: 33–50. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Tricco, Andrea C., Erin Lillie, Wasifa Zarin, Kelly K. O'Brien, Heather Colquhoun, Danielle Levac, David Moher, Micah D. J. Peters, Tanya Horsley, Laura Weeks, and et al. 2018. PRISMA extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR): Checklist and explanation. *Annals of Internal Medicine* 169: 467–73. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Turpin, Aaron, and Micheal L. Shier. 2019. Social entrepreneurial orientation in human service organizations: A scoping review. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance* 44: 144–68. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Turyakira, Peter, Kasimu Sendawula, Marion Nanyanzi, Hanifah Nantale, and Joyce Namirimo Tamale. 2025. Social entrepreneurship: Empirical evidence on its contribution to the realization of the sustainable development goals in Uganda. *Journal of Work-Applied Management* 17: 160–72. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Wareham, Jonathan, and Thorkil Sonne. 2008. Harnessing the power of autism spectrum disorder. *Innovations: Technology, Governance, Globalization* 3: 11–27. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Widagdo, Ari Kuncara, Rahmawati Rahmawati, Rochmat Aldy Purnomo, Noor Ismawati Jaafar, and Umatun Markhumah. 2025. Advancing Disability Inclusion through Social and Digital Entrepreneurship in ASEAN. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Scientific Studies* 8: 1139–52. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Wolf, Miriam, and Johanna Mair. 2019. Purpose, commitment and coordination around small wins: A proactive approach to governance in integrated hybrid organizations. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 30: 535–48. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Zivkovic, Sharon. 2024. Addressing autistic unemployment through autistic owned and led social enterprise. *Social Enterprise Journal* 20: 766–84. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.