

Expanded abstract

The cohesive role of the foundational sector in the face of the new normality. The situation in the Basque Country

Objectives

The role that the third sector is playing in general, and foundations in particular, in the response to this health, social and economic crisis generated by covid-19, is being very relevant. The response of the social economy to the exceptional situation generated by the pandemic, the profusion of social economy entities in our territory has constituted a nursery of sociability, resilience and recovery (Chaves, 2020).

This article will analyse how the pandemic has affected the foundations in Euskadi and their future perspectives in this next post-pandemic context in order to fulfill their founding purposes and maintain their cohesive and supportive role. It is proposed to start working on the post-pandemic context, strategically rethinking organizations, imagining a future in which the pandemic would have left structural changes in their management and work organization models.

In order to develop this investigation, once completed a revision of the most recent literature carried out on the impact of the pandemic, the foundations and the social economy, an analysis of the foundational sector in Euskadi, its features and specific situation will be carried out through surveys. and in-depth interviews with social agents

Theoretical Framework

Foundations in the Basque Country have historically had a prominent role in social life due to the activities carried out and to the relevant effects they have generated for the society in which they coexist. They create value and reinvest all their economic results to continue their mission and activities. Many of the assistance entities in the field of dependency and care for the elderly or disabled people, research centres, large cultural facilities or many educational institutions are articulated in the form of a foundation.

According to official data, the Basque Country has a total of 605 active foundations in 2018, which generated employment in that year for more than 13,000 people, approximately 60% of the same women. These entities mobilize a very important number of volunteers, more than 25,000, who also participate in the development of the different activities to be carried out. As an economic result, income of more than 1,000 million euros is generated, with more than half of the same results from the invoicing of the entities themselves, and the rest mainly subsidies granted to them for the development of activities of general interest.

Much of the activity of foundations in the Basque Country, both in the public and private sectors, focuses on social services, education and research, which account for 65% of the total volume. Also noteworthy is the development of activities in the culture and sports sectors, which add up to 10% more in each area. They reflect the issues that as a society we consider necessary to develop, working to increase the benefits that our country offers in these areas, thus improving the quality of life of citizens.

Methodology

The research carried out seeks to analyse how the pandemic has affected the foundations in Euskadi and their future perspectives. The aim is to study the situation of the Basque founding sector in two temporal moments: from the declaration of the state of alarm to the present, and the prospects for a post-pandemic future. More specifically, the objective is to investigate about the following aspects:

- Impact on foundations during the pandemic and the persistence of such effects.
- The contributions from foundations during the pandemic and projections after the pandemic.
- And forecasting future needs of the foundational sector.

In order to complete this and given the lack of any work regard within the framework of the Autonomous Community of Euskadi (CAE), to achieve these objectives, two methodological instruments have been used: a survey directed at Basque foundations, as well as interviews in depth to people from the sector itself. It has offered the possibility to obtain broad-based information through the surveys, reflecting the diversity of the sector, deepening and clarifying with the interviews.

The survey was sent to 113 Foundations, those that are members of Funko (Basque Confederation of Foundations), as well as other non-members with a relationship maintained due to their participation in training actions and previous research work. The survey was answered by 42 entities. The sample is considered sufficient and adequate. It is considered that the relevant issue is to be able to access those foundations that show greater dynamism in achieving their founding purpose and, on the other hand, that the set of entities that have responded to the survey reflects the general characteristics of the Basque foundation sector. Both questions have been achieved in the development of this research.

Results

The presentation of the results has been structured according to the objectives of the research, linked in turn to the three dimensions of the analysis:

- Impact on foundations during and after the pandemic: Difficulties in making forecasts stand out, a factor indicated by 80.9% as a relevant issue during the pandemic and by 54.7% after the pandemic. Another aspect referred to by an important part of the group of foundations participating in the survey have been the adaptation to new technologies

and teleworking, the difficulty in reorganizing work or service, financial and liquidity problems and workload or excessive activity.

- Contributions from foundations and the foundational sector during the pandemic and future contribution to economic and social recovery: The adequacy of service provision and the incorporation of technology-based solutions are the most identified factors in the survey. Those aspects made it possible to maintain social services and care for groups at risk of exclusion, an activity in which foundations have a prominent presence.
- Needs of the foundational sector after the pandemic: collaboration with other entities as a need that intensifies after the pandemic, financial resources and simplification in relations with the administration, as well as support to improve the application of new technologies are the highlights.

Limitations of the investigation

As previously indicated, the survey was sent to 113 of the 605 active organizations that complete the foundational sector in the Basque Country, which are Funko partner entities or the ones which agreed to take part in activities that the Basque Confederation of foundations could carry out. The limitation of not having any public access database or repository, with the data of the foundations to be able to address them, limits the ability to access a larger number for the development of the survey.

The survey was answered by 42 entities, which represented, as previously indicated, those that offer the greatest activity and the diversity of sectors in which the foundations participate.

Practical conclusions

It is necessary to recognize the work of the founding sector in the social context as a powerful tool to guarantee the continuity of its activity in the future. While it seems that the end of the health crisis is approaching, even if it is slower than desirable, the social crisis is still a long way from being solved, because we have not even reached the maximum peak. Therefore, we are aware that the work of social entities will continue to be essential, as it has been during the first year of the pandemic.

The study carried out has highlighted that the contribution of foundations in the coming years is understood from two different perspectives. On the one hand, in relation to the activity sector in which each foundation participates, and which has a relevant impact on the revitalization of the activity sector itself. On the other hand, the perspective of the foundational sector as a whole, highlighting the common characteristics of all foundations and, in particular, the ones of general interest orientation.