

Expanded abstract

The Social Enterprises in the Vocational Training for unemployed. The difficult challenge of the Social Innovation

This paper focuses on the study of public and private organizations that provide training opportunities for the unemployed and puts special emphasis on social enterprises. This work delves into the relationships that these organizations maintain with the state, the market (companies), and the community or civil society. To this end, we follow the theoretical approach developed by Pestoff (1998, 2008), which is exemplified by his welfare triangle. This model began to be implemented in the 1980s under the term 'welfare-mix' and was indicative of a new approach to social and employment policy. In this context, we highlight the gradual increase in the number of training programs that social enterprises are offering worldwide, with many of these companies coming from the third sector (Bromley, Schofer & Longhofer, 2018). We also note the interactions these companies have with the market, the community or civil society, and the state (Defourny & Nyssens, 2012). Moreover, in the last decade, the European Union has been giving greater prominence to social innovation, which is considered by some scholars to be a key strategic plan for social enterprises to more effectively address the failures of the state and the market (Defourny & Nyssens, 2012; Mulgan, 2006, 2007). In general terms, social innovation is based on initiatives that seek novel solutions to social problems and include the participation of the community (Murray, *et al.*, 2010).

Based on these basic premises and more recent research, this empirical work, which was carried out in 2018 in the province of Cadiz (Spain), focuses on two objectives. The first is to analyze the typology of organizations that provide training opportunities for unemployed people, which allows us to confirm the relevance of social enterprises. The second objective is to analyze the elements that make it difficult for these training centers to adopt initiatives that allow for more autonomy and cooperation between organizations. This second objective is achieved by examining some of the theoretical assumptions outlined in the first few sections of this article, which are based on studies that highlight how cooperation between organizations favors innovation initiatives. To this end, 12 in-depth interviews were conducted with public and private organizations that provide training opportunities for unemployed people. These include non-governmental organizations, federations for disabled people, trade unions, and administrative centers, with 6 of the 12 organizations being social enterprises. We also analyzed the training programs and the type of relationships that these organizations had with each other and with the state. The results of some of the items from a survey of centers collaborating with the *Junta de Andalucía* (Regional Government of Andalusia) are also included, together with the results obtained from the secondary source analysis of the list of centers available

on the *Junta's* website. Moreover, the information obtained for this research has been rounded out with information collected from 7 focus interviews, which used unemployed students from the training courses who had different social profiles (classified according to disability, gender, and age). The interviews with vulnerable groups provided information regarding their negative perceptions towards labor market insertion and regarding the unfavorable consequences of unemployment on their lives. The methodology used conforms to the criteria of inter-method triangulation and data triangulation, as the same research topic was approached using quantitative and qualitative techniques, which allowed for enriching data analysis on a single matter (Forni & De Grande, 2020:166). The information obtained from the interview transcriptions was separated into analysis categories according to the theoretical assumptions developed in the first few pages of the paper and were specified as the following: A) Centers' assessment of the training program provided by the *Junta de Andalucía*. B) Hierarchical relations they maintain with the state. C) Horizontal relationships with similar organizations and with other types of centers. D) Characteristics of the training programs in which they participate and which may limit them.

Around 60% of the centers collaborating with the *Junta de Andalucía* to provide training for unemployed people in the province of Cadiz, are companies, with most of them being social enterprises for labor insertion and training. However, non-governmental organizations, foundations, federations for disabled people, and business organizations, etc. are also involved. In regard to the particularities that characterize these organizations and limit their social innovation initiatives, the following should be highlighted: a) the *Junta de Andalucía* establishes overly strict controls on center approval and training specialties that make it difficult to maintain measures that are flexible to changes in the environment; b) the hierarchical relations that these centers maintain with the state do not allow them to develop their own initiatives; and c) these centers have to adjust to the guidelines set by the calls for training courses, which establish a budget and a specific period of time for the presentation and execution of proposals. In addition to the above, it has been confirmed that these companies compete with each other and, consequently, there is little cooperation between the organizations involved in providing training opportunities for unemployed people. However, we must consider that these research results are representative of geographical areas with high unemployment rates, such as is the case for the province of Cadiz. The similarities and differences of these organizations compared to the types and relationships between organizations from other territories are unknown. There has also not been an in-depth study of the specific characteristics of each organization in terms of their budget and the quality of relationships they may maintain with the state, the market, and the community. Moreover, there could even be particular interests within the organizations involved in providing training opportunities beyond those established in the call for proposals.

This work also proposes several areas for future research. It raises the need to study the possible relationships between training for employment and sustainable development as education for social inclusion is a priority objective in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015). In this regard, social innovation is again important because, from a sustainable

development perspective, providing training for unemployed people would mean working on both social integration and labor insertion, having them be directed towards the creation of stable jobs. This cannot be achieved automatically in an area with a high unemployment rate and, therefore, social innovation is once again a priority.

Another line of research would be the analysis of how these social enterprises have been incorporated into vocational training opportunities for unemployed people. This could be done by looking at their evolution in recent decades through the use of comparative studies within Spain and with other countries and distinguishing between the various participating social enterprises, non-governmental organizations, federations for disabled people (such as ONCE's Fundosa), and training and insertion companies. This line of research would allow us to better understand the relationship between economic, social, and political changes in the management of training opportunities for unemployed people as an active employment policy.

Finally, this work is important because it focuses attention on issues that are scarcely addressed in the literature despite their enormous importance, such as the typology of organizations and their relationships with the state, the market, and the community. Moreover, it also analyzes, in more detail, the repercussions for unemployed people of being provided with training opportunities for labor market insertion and social integration, taking into account the particularities of not only the territory but also those of vulnerable unemployed people. In this sense, it is important to note that the results highlight the need to adopt strategies that link training opportunities to the needs of companies and also to the needs of the community, making unemployed people and their environment more involved in the creation of training solutions that use innovation to favor the creation of more stable jobs.

Keywords: Market, public and private organizations, vulnerable unemployed, administration, community, social innovation.