

EXPANDED ABSTRACT

Digitalization, monitoring and evaluation of the social economy impact. Analysis of spanish third sector of social action. “Juntos por el empleo” case study

In recent years, numerous studies have been conducted assessing the needs of Third Sector Social Action (TSAS from now on) entities to develop skills that enable them to communicate and demonstrate their results and efficiency.

In this process, monitoring, understood as the collection of information on aspects related to its management and the tracking of its progress in a routine and systematic way, and evaluation, understood as the collection of data to make judgments with the consequent assessment, become key activities to make the various stakeholders participate in the impact that they generate.

TSAS entities' stakeholders are strongly demanding information about their performance and results, information that can reflect a holistic picture of the socio-economic impact they are really generating. These requirements are exhorted either formally or directly through evaluation exigencies included in the contracts or either indirectly through norms that social organizations have to comply with. Therefore, TSAS entities are conditioned by the influence of logics and norms that other groups uphold.

A standardized monitoring and evaluation methodology that integrates, with a common and understandable language, internal information needs with external stakeholders information demands is needed. One of the groups that have heavily exerted pressure on the former is of the funders, so that TSAS organizations need to communicate and report what they do and how they do it in order to receive financing.

This demonstration of the value generated require metrics that are based on the developing of indicators that social impact measurement incorporates. It is not enough to show the information that favours the organization or project that is meant to communicate but as a result of institutional pressures exercised over the TSAS, the level of transparency on its performance is very high. Along with this, society has experienced a digital evolution that has generated profound changes in every area, group and individual.

In this paper, we will focus on the changes that affect monitoring and evaluation practices of TSAS entities. An analysis from the theory is needed not only to build an evidence base about

monitoring and evaluation practice and its benefits, if any, but also to place that practice within the context of funders' requirements and evaluation activity.

In order to analyse the pressure of the funders, we will rely on the institutional and on the resources dependence theories, which provides the basis for studying how external pressures affect organizational behaviour. According to institutional theory, the information provided by entities about what they do and how they do it is a consequence of the demands placed upon them by their stakeholders: consumers, investors, employees, public agents, funders and others. These demands constitute a way of institutional pressure that motivates organizations to "improve" the information they provide. And the situation of dependence on the funders of the TSSA entities means that they are forced to comply with the demands imposed on the information to be communicated and on the actions and results reporting.

In parallel, in order to meet their own economic, social and environmental objectives, these entities need to have, process and communicate a large amount of information. These data must also answer to specific requirements for facilitating the development of an effective management and for controlling their results and possible deviations.

In this sense, it's required to identify new digital tools and working practices that can support evaluation as well as making these tools and practices to contribute to the entities' mission and objectives. "Juntos por el Empleo", an initiative promoted by Fundación Accenture together with different social entities, business and public organizations, is analysed as an interesting practice for new digital tools implementation that have improve social projects and collective practices monitoring and evaluation.

This paper's main objective is to highlight the TSAS entities dependence on their funders and how this dependence requires them to provide information about their activities and results in a specific format. Within this framework we show "Juntos por el empleo" project as a practice that is being developed to face these requirements by the Spanish TSAS entities.

The work is developed with the following steps: we start from an analysis from the institutional theory and the resources dependence theory to justify the importance of the monitoring and evaluation of the TSAS entities' results to meet the funders and stakeholders' requirements. Next, we discuss the need to identify the new digital tools and ways of working that help these monitoring and evaluating processes, to finish with the case study of "Juntos por el empleo" as a collective impact project focused on the implementation of new digital tools to facilitate the management and evaluation of social activities.

KEYWORDS: Third Sector Social Action, digitalization, monitoring, evaluation of the social impact, institutional theory, resources dependence theory.