

EXPANDED ABSTRACT

Measures to boost and consolidate an ecosystem favourable to Social Economy in Galicia. The Eusumo Network

In recent years, an ecosystem aimed at boosting Social Economy (SE) through the creation of different tools designed to tackle the different needs that the creation and consolidation of organisations within this sector require, has been consolidating in Galicia. The Eusumo Network, legally established by Decree 225/2012 of 27 November 2012, stands out among this group of measures.

The main objective of this paper is to analyse the role the Eusumo Network has played since its creation, as well as to consider its impact on the development and expansion of an ecosystem which favours the consolidation of SE in Galicia. In order to do this, this paper comprises two different parts: in the first one, our study is contextualised within the framework of the development of the public policies involved in the promotion of SE in Spain, and then the Eusumo Network is described. This description includes Eusumo's main objectives, the activities carried out to boost their achievement, the organisations that take part in the Network and the coordination process between them. This part ends with the analysis of the financial aid allocated to the Network and to the organisations that make it up, within the context of contemporary public policies that support SE.

The second part of the paper focuses on the results obtained by the Network in the last eight years, paying special attention to its impact on SE public policies in Galicia and, in particular, on the creation of an ecosystem favourable to the consolidation of SE in this region. Finally, the main conclusions and recommendations drawn from our study are summarised.

The study follows a descriptive and evaluative approach. To do this, a quantitative analysis of the data and indicators obtained from different sources has been carried out, namely: the activity reports of the different units responsible for SE in Galicia in the last years and the execution report of the Eusumo Network; the historical records of public procurement in Galicia; the statistical data provided by the official records of cooperatives and the budget allocation of the autonomous government before and after the creation of Eusumo.

The results of the study show, in the first place, that the Eusumo Network has fulfilled the aims set in the decree of its creation, which focused on contributing to the promotion and dissemination of SE in Galicia, with particular attention to entrepreneurship and to the creation and consolidation of employment.

In 2018 The Network included two hundred and six organisations, which show their commitment to cooperatives and SE. Besides, the Network has become highly influential, since its members include the most representative associations of SE; most city councils in Galicia; the three Galician universities; two of the four provincial councils, and all the Chambers of Commerce in the region. The number of participants in the dissemination activities of the Network has continued to grow since its creation. Furthermore, the percentages of new cooperatives (243 %) and of direct cooperative employment (158 %) stand out among these data. These results show an increasing effectiveness, in view of the most relevant direct results.

As for the improvement of the ecosystem, and therefore of its indirect results, the Network Eusumo has contributed to the passing of various legislation, measures and resources that support and favour Galician SE. The first one was Law 6/2016, of 4 May, of Social Economy in Galicia (LSEGA), which made Galicia the first region with specific legislation on this subject matter. Secondly, the Galician SE Strategy, passed in December 2018, with an allocation of 73 million euros. In addition, the Laboratories to Support the Creation of Employment of Organizations of Social Economy (POCTEC LACES) should be mentioned. This is a European programme intended to foster the creation and consolidation of SE organisations in the Euroregion (Galicia-North of Portugal). In 2019, Galicia was acknowledged as a European Social Economy Region (ESER 2019) by the European Commission. Finally, the analysis of the budgets that the Galician regional government (Xunta) invests in boosting SE, which have continued to increase since 2013, evinces an upward trend since the birth of the Eusumo Network. Specifically, they have increased from 11.49 euros million in 2013 to 20.10 in 2019, growing an average of 12.21% per year.

This study shows the direct and indirect contribution of public policies aimed at boosting SE, paying special attention to those labelled as advanced policies or hard model, which are characterised by their budgetary effort and by the diversity and innovation in the measures that they carry out. It also shows that long term public policies, such as the Eusumo Network, can contribute to improving and developing an ecosystem that boosts the area on which they are implemented. In the case of SE, it acts as a booster to set up other measures, affecting directly the improvement of budgetary policies in this issue.

In addition, this paper puts forward some suggestions for the functioning and future development of the Eusumo Network, contributing to its strengthening and helping to its continuation in time. Therefore, its contribution is twofold: (1) the Eusumo Network is identified as a public policy that favours the promotion of SE and (2) a group of six measures to improve its efficiency and efficacy, as well as, indirectly, the existing ecosystem, are presented.

KEYWORDS: Social economy, public policies, promotion of the social economy, ecosystem, Eusumo Network, Galicia.