



Methods and Indicators for the Evaluation of the Social Economy

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Plan

1. Context

- 1.1 The evaluation of the social economy, a complex question
- 1.2 Evaluate the specific contribution of the social economy
- 1.3 The social economy, a new development paradigm?

2. Objectives of the Evaluation

- 2.1 Methods and indicators of evaluation
- 2.2 «Social utility» of the evaluation of the social economy

3. Research Proposal

- 3.1 Goals and objectives
- 3.2 Work method

1. Context

1.1 Evaluation of the social economy, a complex question

- evaluate the SE = mix the social with the economic
- evaluation = a force field between state and civil society
- evaluation = distribution of power or instrument for control and standardization?
- evaluation = aim to rationalize in a context of decentralization without resources?
- evaluation instigated by the actors = a negotiation process with the state, and with the civil society

1.2 Evaluate the specific contribution of the SE

- organizational & institutional particularities, relationship to state and to market
- contribution to employment, but not only
- unequal inscription into the market or into public policies: visibility problem
- evaluation practices vary according to objectives, publics, policies (and their evolution!)
- partial data; disseminated in national statistics
- no large-scale study of the «social economy»
- competition and banalization: social and ethic auditing and reporting, ISO

1.3 The social economy, an «other» development paradigm ?

- SE = laboratory of social innovations vis-à-vis market or state governance, their transformation
- governance regimes or institutional arrangements vary from one country to another
- no public or scientific recognition of methodologies and indicators specific to the SE
- weak capacity of the SE to negotiate and link to its different stakeholders or to its public and private partners
- evaluation is never neutral; it conveys conceptions of what role one gives to the SE in the economy and in society

2. Objectives of the Evaluation

2.1 Methods and indicators of evaluation (1)

Methods

- scale: macro, meso, micro
- object: from programme analysis to organisational audit
- objective: norm standardization, conformity to a programme, better practices
- indicators: quantitative, qualitative, both
- evaluator: external, internal, negotiated

2.1 Methods and indicators of evaluation (2)

Indicators

- organizational dimension: quality, efficacy, productivity, etc.
- «social utility» dimension: impacts, reduction of social inequalities, structuring effects on sectors and territories, redistribution effects, mobilization of communities, etc.
- institutional dimension: partnership governance (sectoral, territorial), new rules of the game, bridges with public and market economy, etc.

2.1 Methods and indicators of evaluation (3)

Definitions of the social economy

- the social economy components: the «sure» ones and the «uncertain » or hybrid ones (Desroche)
- actors, activities, and rules (Vienney)
- reciprocity and solidarity dynamics (Eme, Laville)
- plural or mixed economy (Polanyi, Evers, Laville)
- compromise between action logics (Enjolras)

Typology of organizations

- aspiration or necessity (Lévesque)
- economic or social dominance
- mutual or general interest (Gui)
- source of revenues: market, government, philanthropy (Salamon, Sokolowski, List)

2.2 «Social utility» of the evaluation (1)

Notions

- Social profitability
- Social return on investment
- Social utility
- Social innovation
- Social added-value
- Externalities and collective benefits
- Social accounting
- etc.

2.2 «Social utility» of the evaluation (2)

Approaches

- managerial and strategic perspective: are standard tools well adapted for the SE?
- neo-institutionalist perspective: is SE more than a market or state failure?
- institutionalist sociology: how can we insulate the effects of the SE from other factors that could have produced the same effects?

2.2 «Social utility » of the evaluation (3)

Evaluation paradigms

- inductive, based on empirical observation
(*evidence based theory; grounded theory*)
- deductive and critical, based on theoretical a priori
(*theory driven*)

Choice of indicators

- deterministic: deduced from programme objectives
(representative democracy)
- of experimentation: quality process with the actors involved (direct democracy of users and producers)
- alternative: based on values (deliberative democracy, social democracy)

3. Research Proposal

3.1 Goal and objectives

Goal

- comparative analysis of methods and indicators of evaluation of the social economy, in different national contexts

Objectives

- analyse the evaluation methods
- evaluate the underlying conceptions of the organisation or the enterprise, of the society model
- produce a synthesis: typology of methods of evaluation, their impact on the conception of the SE within different institutional contexts

3.2 Method (1)

Scope

- enterprises and organizations of the social economy (EOSE) and their sectors

Steps

1. Typology
2. Comparative analysis
3. Recommendations

3.2 Method (2)

Typology

- 1) What is the conception of the EOSE?
(co-operative or associative ideal-type?
component of the social, solidarity, popular,
alternative ... economy? etc.)
- 2) What is the conception of the role of the EOSE
in society ? (neo-liberal, social-statist, in
solidarity?) or the governance regime
(public, corporate, competitive,
partnership?), etc.

3.2 Method (3)

Relevant data:

- Who is asking for evaluation?
- What are the major stakes related to evaluation?
- What are the dimensions evaluated?
- What are the effects of the evaluation processes?
- What are the objects/subjects of the evaluation?
- What are the indicators and criterias being used?
- etc.

MERCI!

Questions and comments, please