

## Values and outcomes in public space: an evaluation framework for the third sector

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The social achievements of third sector (TS) organizations have a double nature as social projections of values, they intend to disseminate, and as outcomes, which should produce individuals' impact, in terms of benefits. This is the core of social management, to render values and to produce public goods for *public constituencies* (founders, donors, workers, voluntaries and beneficiaries) and for mission accomplishment. This peculiarity suggests that the evaluation in TS must consider the bonds among the reproduction of values and the impact of benefits considering outcomes as measurable objects and learning from its effectiveness the indicators that identify the communication of values.

The evaluation literature gathers many successful efforts to construct methodologies and to match impact and economic evaluations to the field of TS. Although the technical procedures are well established, some interrogations deserve our attention, as the diversity of visions, needs and capacities of the *public constituencies*; the interpretative approach of both qualitative and quantitative evaluations; the intangibility of some benefits; the difficulties to prepare control and treat groups; as the limitation of methods adapted from the broadest area of public policies.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest an evaluation framework of mission accomplishment, resulting from the public space potential nature of the Third Sector, focusing the perspectives of *public constituencies*. It is done by approaching the results of social management as values and benefits entangled in a public space endowed with an assembly of attributes: representation of collective interests; democratization; quality; effectiveness; visibility; public culture; universality; autonomy; social control; and sustainability. It is proposed to take this ensemble as an evaluation framework, or, as the instrument of analysis that identifies the values and the objects endowed with values that we have to evaluate.

It is emphasized in this paper the theoretical works of H. Putnam and A. Sen and it is presented the results of a survey about the perceptions of the *public constituencies* on these attributes as a guarantee of an effective reproduction of values tied to the outcomes. In this sense the public space attributes are indicators of public nature's flourishing and mission accomplishment by social management in TS.

Considering the contemporary worldwide actions including TS organizations as actors, two more points must be considered. Firstly the financial agencies request economic and impact evaluations. Secondly, the political concern among third sector that operates more closely to its frontiers with the market and with public policies in developing countries. Both these issues impose the identification of values entangled with outcomes as a way to perform the accreditation of TS capacity to provide development conditions and public goods.

This article reports partial results of a current research on public space attributes perception, by those *public constituencies*. At this time these results indicate that this framework has practical viability as a tool to allow a new look into the constraints of values and benefits proposed by organizational mission.

### References

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