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'THE TYRANNY OF PROJECTS'. EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL ACTION PROFESSIONALS IN SPAIN

Abstract

This article is the result of the European Project (Key Action KA203) called 'LEMA "Learning from the Margins" Social inclusion of highly marginalised young people urban settings' (ref.: 2019-1-DK01-KA203-060285). The project analysed the situation of Young Migrants Formerly in State Care in Spain. The aim of the article is to analyse the employment situation experienced by professionals working in the care sector. The methodology used was Educational Research Squared. The results explore the current system, which is essentially project-based and prevent more appropriate socio-educational actions from being undertaken. The main conclusion is that joint action by the administrations involved is needed to enable a coordinated, efficient and more collaborative model.

Keywords

Children and young people at social risk, Young migrants, Transition to adult life, Social action model, Professional intervention, Workplace situation.

Introduction

European policies consider that providing the population with quality social services is an investment. There are a number of different European models that shape the social welfare regime; the differences between them lie in the traditions, cultures, environments and dominant political ideologies in each of the countries (García-Campá, 2007). Regardless of the country and the model in force, the organisations that form part of the Third Sector Social Action (TSSA) increased their spheres of action to the detriment of state institutions and services (Lacomba and Berlanga, 2022). TSSA organisations are seen as key players in the provision of services for the production of welfare and the management of public services (Fresno and Rauchberger, 2016). However, differences in the financing, delivery and organisation of social services across countries lead to inequalities in the supply of and access to these services (European Anti-Poverty Network, 2023b).

Many of the social problems in Spain are outsourced to private (mostly non-profit) TSSA organisations, which are responsible for addressing these issues. The influence of European policies on Spanish national policies for the provision of proximity services has served to justify that the most vulnerable population, including migrants, should be served by organisations that are closer to them, are trusted by the population they serve and offer a significant reduction in labour costs (Lacomba and Berlanga, 2022). As Spanish social services are decentralised, the different Autonomous Regions have powers related to the provision of social services.

This has meant that there is great disparity (in both investment and coverage) and little coordination between the different regions, since these services are managed autonomously, reflecting the interests and priorities of each regional government. The

progress and development in Spain's regions is therefore unbalanced, with greater structural inequalities in southern regions, evidenced by their at-risk-of-poverty rate of 27.1% compared to 15.3% in northern regions (European Anti-Poverty Network, 2023a).

Another point is the fragmentation of social protection institutions, both vertical and horizontal. While the different areas of social policy come under the purview of national, regional and local governments (vertical fragmentation), the various areas in the system may be managed by different public bodies and/or private organisations (horizontal fragmentation) (European Anti-Poverty Network, 2021).

Against this backdrop, the third sector organisations involved in social actions have adopted market-based methods to diversify their resources and gain legitimacy in the public administration (González-Cacheda et al., 2018; Pape et al., 2020). Díaz et al. (2021) explained that there is a dependent and necessary cooperation between the public administration and TSSA organisations. Organisations have to compete for limited resources to obtain the allocation of funds where cost is more important than quality or social provisions. Public administrations assume a monitoring and supervisory role in the provision of services (González-Portillo and Jaraíz, 2023) and must comply with Directive 2014/24/EU of 26 February 2014 on public procurement when selecting a service provider, taking into account the best value for money bid (European Anti-Poverty Network, 2023b). In this way, organisations receive public funding, which is the source of most of their income (NGO Platform for Social Action, 2023).

This social service delivery system has introduced several key challenges. Firstly, public funding through subsidies has resulted in more homogeneous projects, developed by organisations that are required to meet the guidelines set out in official calls for proposals (Lacomba and Berlanga, 2022). It has also influenced the duration and continuity of the intervention and has raised concerns about long-term impact and sustainability (Maya et al., 2020).

Other disadvantages are the lack of human and material resources due to poor social investment and procedures becoming more bureaucratic, largely turning professionals into managers who mainly carry out reactive rather than preventive work (European Anti-Poverty Network, 2021). Brown et al. (2019) suggested that bureaucracy, high caseloads, limited resources and the rigidity of the system prevent professionals from providing the necessary care to the most vulnerable people. According to Martín (2016), bureaucracy affects professional identity and generates anxiety and unresponsiveness in the intervention of the professionals providing services.

In addition, González-Portillo and Jaraíz (2023) acknowledged that employment quality in TSSA organisations is not good. The NGO Platform for Social Action's (2023) reported that 51.1% of the people working in this sector are employed on a temporary contract and that 52.3% of them have a contract of up to 20 hours per week. This highlights the vulnerability of the workers themselves, especially those working in smaller institutions with greater funding uncertainty. Practitioners therefore have to cope with conflicting feelings related to commitment and lack of time; and in some cases, despite having the skills to intervene, they encounter obstacles that limit their action (Marco et al., 2023; Power et al., 2021). Worker turnover, discontinuity and caseload pressures hinder the dedication, consistency and bonding necessary for a relational process based on trust. Professionals are perceived as strangers (Groining and Sting, 2019; Hiles et al., 2014). This may result in the target population being reluctant to seek help, believe in them and/or participate in their own process (Munro and Simkiss, 2020). On the other hand, professionals are exposed to a high risk of burnout due to heavy workloads, the emotional nature of the work, the perceived lack of power and the potential conflict between professional values (to support the population) and the values of the

organisation itself (in terms of reducing costs) (Hiles et al., 2014). Brendel et al. (2023) demonstrated that intra-organisational barriers (shortage of tools, overwork, lack of experience, etc.) and legal obstacles (jurisdictional conflicts and regulatory constraints) have a negative impact on the professionals.

Another critical point relates to access. Undocumented migrants cannot enjoy all essential services, which leads to discriminatory arbitrariness and aggravates their vulnerability (European Anti-Poverty Network, 2023b). Linked to this, Lacomba and Berlanga (2022) highlighted the need for greater connection between migration policies and welfare policies in order to avoid the existence of two parallel systems of care (one for nationals and a separate one for migrant people) with different managers (the administration and TSSA organisations).

As reflected in the European Anti-Poverty Network report (2021), the EU promotes intervention in the provision of social services that use an integrated approach and takes an ecological perspective, as it is considered to be the most effective way to fight poverty and social exclusion. However, none of the Member States, including Spain, has been able to implement a comprehensive strategy due to a lack of administrative and/or coordination capacity.

Furthermore, as reflected in the same report, the social actions of the third sector organisations tend to be seen as stopgaps or one-off actions. Marco et al. (2023) noted that the intervention carried out with minors and young migrants is improvised, that administrative measures are volitional and that the programmes lack socio-educational projects and adequate tools; as a result, these young people often find alternative itineraries that increase the social risk they face.

The above considerations bring to the fore the treatment that social action is given in the political sphere, where economic interests seem to take precedence over human needs. While efficiency and sustainability of services must be pursued, the current system exceeds the scope of these principles, which gives rise to situations that undermine the actual work to be done.

Methods

This article is the result of the work carried out within a European Project called ‘LEMA “Learning from the Margins” Social inclusion of highly marginalised young people urban settings’ (ref.: 2019-1-DK01-KA203-060285). The Project aimed to examine the experiences of marginalised young people in Denmark, Sweden and Spain in order to contribute to their social inclusion. The participants in the Project were one university and one organisation from the Third Sector Social Action (TSSA) from each country; the latter implemented socio-educational programmes for young people in social exclusion. In Spain, the participating TSSA organisation requested that the Project focused on Young Migrants Formerly in State Care (YMFSCs). The aim of this paper is to analyse the workplace situation of Spanish socio-educational action professionals who engage with this group.

Educational Research Squared (ER²) was the methodology used. ‘E’, stands for education and ‘R’ refers to research, and ‘ER’ is raised to the second power because: (i) it refers to pedagogical research conducted on an educational issue and (ii) it also includes a socio-educational action (in this case, carried out with young migrants). In contrast to Action Research, ER² has a particular idiosyncrasy, as it is an open methodological approach to the object of study, the purposes, the procedure, the use of methods, etc.

Although more sources of information and data collection techniques were used in the project, only the ones described below were used for this article.

Participants

The participating TSSA organisation was implementing a transition to adult life programme with YMFSCs who lived in two residential facilities, each of which accommodated up to six young people. In the course of the research, several young men from Morocco aged between 18 and 21 lived in these facilities. During their participation in the programme, the organisation provided them with basic living necessities (accommodation, food, hygiene, etc.) and direct and indirect support through various professionals, with the aim of helping them to regularise their situation and achieve emancipation. The educational, legal, social and professional support was made available by networking with other organisations.

The sources of information considered for this article were: a) eight young people from the aforementioned transition to adult life programme. The participation of young people in the project was voluntary. They participated in the project from the third month of its beginning until its completion. It was the young participants, as recipients of the work of professionals, who ultimately suffered its labour consequences. b) The other source of information was professionals who work with young people, who were the ones experiencing those working conditions and know how they affected their work. The following table shows the participants, their characteristics and the data collection techniques and instruments used. The different profiles of the professionals brought different perspectives to the research on the ecosystem of intervention used with these young people.

Table 1. Instruments for collecting information about both the participating young people (4 interviews with each one) and the professionals in the sector (SWOT, focus group and interview with one of them). The basic characteristics of the participants are also described.

Data collection techniques and instruments

A diverse range of data collection instruments were used. The life trajectories of the eight YMFSCs were studied by drawing up a 'Lifeline' for each of them. These trajectories were studied to achieve the general objective of the research, but through them it was also possible to see how young migrants perceived the work carried out with them by socio-educational intervention professionals. This research technique is typically used in the biographical method and consists of taking a chronological journey through a person's life, pointing out their most significant milestones (Gramling and Carr, 2004). In total, four biographical interviews (Pujadas, 2002) were conducted with each YMFSC, that is, 32 interviews.

On the other hand, three data collection techniques were used with professionals to obtain the most complete information possible. A focus group session involved the professional participants sharing their perceptions about what brings them together and what sets them apart. For two hours they reflected on the most substantive aspects that had emerged from the lifelines, analysed the situation of the migrant group members and discussed their opportunities for progress. The same professionals also held a joint SWOT session to discuss the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats they find in the social inclusion process of the YMFSCs. This session took place online and lasted one hour. An interview was also conducted with the organisation's project coordinator. It

explored specific issues in greater depth and covered aspects that had not been sufficiently addressed in the previous techniques.

Procedure and data analysis

Following data collection, all the resulting information was analysed. Methodological triangulation was ensured by confirming and verifying information by using different data collection techniques and sources (Perelló Oliver, 2009). Categories were constructed using the grounded theory (Glasser & Strauss, 1980) and discourse analysis. A critical approach was adopted that was centred on the object of study. To facilitate this process, the data analysis software ATLAS.ti (version 7.5) was used. Table 2 shows the category and subcategories that structure the analysis.

Table 2. Categories and subcategories derived from the fieldwork conducted with young people (4 interviews per person) and with professionals in the sector (SWOT, focus Group and interview with one of them).

The following ethical considerations were taken into account during the study: the terms of participation were negotiated with each of the informants, who signed the informed consent; the identity of the participating individuals and organisations was kept anonymous at all times (pseudonyms were used and the use of omittable names was avoided); the confidentiality of the information was also guaranteed, in accordance with research codes of conduct and applicable data protection regulations. The data were member-checked by the informants (The life stories were verified by the young migrants. And practitioners reviewed the data records in which they had participated).

Results

This section details the main findings on the employment conditions experienced by socio-educational action professionals working with young migrants. The tyranny of projects is the underlying idea within the framework used, which includes: (1) The commodification of social action; (2) The logic of projects; and (3) Precarity.

The commodification of social action

Young migrants often have diverse needs (physiological, legal, employment-related, educational, etc.), and recourse is made to different Administrations to try to ensure that these needs are met. The diverse responses required are problematical. The main difficulty is that there is no comprehensive plan to address the various problems that young migrants experience. The various Administrations issue calls for proposals to fund different projects, and invite submissions from the TSSA organisations working with this population. The principal repercussions of this approach are outlined below.

Firstly, this way of operating does not guarantee that the various needs of these young people will be met. It also lacks a comprehensive approach. Coordinated planning between different Administrations is needed to ensure adequate ecosystem responses are provided.

In Spain you have to study to get a job. If you want to be a waiter but you can't write, you can't take the order. You won't get hired (Malik, YMFSC 3, Lifeline).

There are no comprehensive care plans for migrant youth (...). Most of the criticisms today are based on the lack of a unified care plan (Interview with project coordinator).

The participating professionals believed that offering specific projects offers only partial solutions to complex problems. These problems require a broad range of holistically-designed actions to give personalised attention. The professionals considered that starting with stopgaps (focus group) and/or quick fixes is not appropriate, as they result in fragmented actions that do not necessarily contribute to the young people's development. They also only seem to be largely palliative rather than preventive in nature. Their essential focus is solving (usually the most urgent) problems, while disregarding or postponing actions that would prevent the triggering situations.

Another big problem is that this issue is usually dealt with as an emergency, with its own mechanisms (...), but we have been operating like this since the 1990s, so it is not an emergency, it is an actual social situation that needs a solid and sustained structure to be able to provide an effective response (Interview with project coordinator).

Although these are social situations, not emergencies, the resources allocated perpetuate their precarity, regardless of their quality and/or structural impact. In contrast, complex, structural planning efforts would not only address the basics but go to the root of these problems in an attempt to solve their causes. While there is some initial awareness of this need, a vast amount of work remains.

The second major consequence of this approach relates to the neoliberal logic (free market and competition) that mediate these projects, which fails to address the disparity of needs and projects required by young migrants.

A significant number of the TSSA organisations involved are private and often do not have sufficiently stable funding. One of their main sources of income is public tenders to finance specific projects (Interview with Project Coordinator).

The competitiveness fostered among different organisations leads to overly ambitious objectives being presented in order to win the project tenders. If these projects are awarded to the bidding organisations, actual implementation may not be that feasible (Project coordinator, SWOT). Additionally, to meet the requirements of a formal call for tenders, organisations sometimes depart from the needs of the group that the intervention is aimed at.

This competitiveness can distort the nature and purpose of the actions needed. Rather than the project, winning the tender becomes the priority. This leads to various situations which can often harm relations between organisations. There is an emphasis on ensuring that their professionals do not share their project ideas with each other, to avoid 'corporate espionage'. This strongly affects the atmosphere between them and means that these organisations are 'thrown into the fray', instead of fostering collaboration and networking between them (Primary Care Expert working with YMFSCs, Focus Group). Practitioners called this the 'tyranny of projects' (Focus group).

I am supposed to have a brilliant relationship with [one organisation] and with [two other organisations] (...), but the projects I design I have to keep to myself and keep my mouth shut lest... They force us to work as part of a network (...), but the Administration forces us to compete with each other. There is 'X' money, and we are all going after it tooth and nail (Project coordinator, Focus group).

The rationale of projects

The rationale behind the system that mediates its entire development needs discussion. According to the professionals consulted, an administrative rationale (characterised by being inflexible and impervious) prevails over the social action rationale. This prevailing logic determines and constrains the design and implementation of projects and any possible positive effects on the people they work with.

...if they are given a residence permit and not a work permit, and when they turn 18, they are on the street and they are not allowed to work...how are they supposed to buy food? what are they supposed to live on? (Educator responsible for the programme, Focus group).

The Administration does not understand the logic behind socio-educational action. It operates on a very rigid rationale that is totally impermeable and fails to adapt to the needs that different situations; it which limits the socio-educational objectives that could be set, limiting the creativity and aspirations of educators or those responsible for submitting projects. They're always allowing the same type of projects, which have certain leeway and allow some flexibility, but their structure is always the same (Project coordinator, SWOT).

Most projects are homogeneous, as ingenuity and goals are limited in their outline and implementation. This restricts their objectives and hinders new, more innovative ways of realising them, which would probably have greater socio-educational potential.

This administrative logic is also quantitative and result-oriented, which leads to a number of counterproductive outcomes. The first is that the success of the project bid relies on setting often unattainable financial objectives (e.g. a very high number of beneficiaries at an underestimated cost), making it difficult to accomplish them. Consequently, the time to work with people on socio-educational issues decreases, because other objectives are prioritised.

Projects continue to be designed in this way despite the fact that the Administration requires that the financial allocation granted must be returned if objectives are not fulfilled [Act 38/2003 (General Subsidies Act)]. For example, Article 28 ('Reimbursement') of the regulations of the Regional Government of Andalusia regarding subsidies in the field of migration policies states:

Where the planned objectives are not fully achieved (...) the level of achievement will be assessed and the amount of the grant will be proportional to the level assessed. This level in relation to the planned objectives must be at least as follows: 60%.

It is the use of quantitative metrics that is criticised here. In practice, this rationale strongly determines the planning and implementation of projects by focusing on quantifiable results, over and above other phenomenological processes that could be of interest for project's beneficiaries.

Another tyrannical thing about projects, you have to reach 'X' number of people, because another thing that projects ask you to do is to say how much each person costs, and that number has to be infinitely ridiculous: 0.30 euros or 1.30 euros, or something like that. And you have to set very high numbers that you then break your back to reach, and that's where the lack of time comes in. As we have to reach such high numbers, we can't take time to meet the qualitative goals, but we have to focus on the quantitative (...). Qualitative goals are of no interest (Project coordinator, SWOT).

This can make professionals lose their focus and alter the purposes of the socio-educational action they take, by objectifying the individuals at whom interventions are aimed and dehumanising their work. For example, they may turn beneficiaries into numbers, rather than individuals who need support. As the excerpt below indicates, organisations think twice about whether to refer a person to another more beneficial entity because this would mean reducing their headcount target, which would likely prevent them from achieving their financial objectives.

The thing was, there was a girl with us whose profile meant that she would be better suited in another organisation that prepared young people for Secondary Education. And we didn't know what to do. It's like: 'Are we out of our minds? Don't we know what to do? We're sending her there and we'll find someone else to make up the numbers' (...). So we get to that point, we get to the point of saying, it is better for this person to go to this other organisation, but if they leave, I can't count that person when I justify the costs of the project (Manager for another resource within the YMFSC network, Focus group).

Moreover, this logic causes a problem for the undocumented migrants in need of most support, who do not have an official identification number. These people cannot benefit from some socio-educational projects because their lack of this identification number means that they are ineligible. They are not considered as beneficiaries because they do not contribute to the achievement of the project objectives. Such projects are therefore only available to people with ID numbers, disregarding ignoring those who may need them even more: 'Many organisations refuse to support people who are in an irregular situation' (Primary care expert working with YMFSCs, SWOT).

The failure to support one of the most vulnerable groups in the community because of this administrative rationale is controversial. The system, the project and the audits to be carried out on them are seemingly more important than the people to be supported. The means are being prioritised over the ends, which is a mistake, as the means must enable the ends, not thwart them.

This spiralling effect goes even further; the participants referred to this as the 'tyranny of resources,' concerning the selection made among potential users to benefit from various existing programmes. These programmes are mostly enjoyed by those who attend and complete the organised activities. Those who are not eligible to participate in them go unnoticed and are therefore not offered other types of support. As the organisations are required to justify that the actions outlined in the project have been carried out, the beneficiaries are only those who are eligible for these actions.

If they don't help us to meet our quantitative achievements, of kids attending the activities, then it is very difficult for them to be selected for the housing facilities (Project Coordinator, Focus Group).

Precarity

Finally, it is worth examining other important consequences of this way of operating based primarily on project funding and implementation.

First of all, project funding is usually awarded to implement a series of specific actions, not to manage ordinary running costs or to carry out other actions. The income to cover ordinary expenses is often insufficient to implement the necessary basic actions, so organisations tend to develop internal organisational strategies to enable a more comprehensive action. Such strategies may lead to stretching the resources allocated to perform the planned interventions plus those that are considered essential, among others.

In other words, some TSSA organisations, in addition to implementing the various projects for which they have funding, draw up resource maximisation plans in order to take other actions that they consider important and would not otherwise have funding. For this purpose, they assign other tasks to the professionals involved in addition to the ones allocated to them under the project for which they were hired.

Each employee's responsibilities include the project for which they were hired and paid on the payroll. They are also in charge of other projects and activities that have some funding, but not enough to hire more human resources. There are certain profiles such as coordination, psychology or legal services that are essential in organisations that work with migrants, but that you cannot allocate 100% to any project, so in the end you have to juggle with the organisation's scarce funding and combine an infinite number of projects to cover the staff's salaries. And that means that we have to work on many different things and we can never provide the expected quality to the core work for which we were hired (Interview with Project Coordinator).

On top of that, there is an overload of bureaucratic tasks that professionals are required to complete. Much of their time is devoted to justifying a project's development. As a result, they have to spend a considerable amount of time on office work instead of socio-educational work, which substantially undermines what should be their primary efforts. A situation they would like to subvert:

Lack of time and workload. Basically we don't have enough time to spend on the kids as we should (...). We are always going so fast (...). And I think that's a weakness (...). Bureaucracy plays a role here. Because in order to get projects we need to submit a very big project and afterwards you have to spend a lot of time on paperwork, so in the end you don't have the time (Manager for another resource in the YMFSC network, SWOT).

Secondly, as the organisations depend on project funding, the current way of operating means that they have to be constantly aware of the policies underpinning the budgets. A change of policy in this area could mean the reduction or elimination of the items that are their funding sources. In addition to the permanent unease that this uncertainty generates, it has other consequences. The most obvious is that it renders medium- and long-term planning impossible. They cannot develop plans and schedules that go beyond the length of the projects. The other consequence is the job instability of the professionals involved. Jobs depend on whether projects are renewed or not, of, which places professionals in this sector in a precarious position.

You have to take into account that our organisations work on a project basis, [so] a lot of [(professionals)] often work with different kids, because a project is finished, there is no money to hire someone else or people's [contract] hours are reduced and they can't continue, because we have to survive. So in one year the kids will have had four educators (...). I think that this weakness and non-continuity with the kids means: First, that the kids get tired, there comes a point where they say, come on, who is this one now (...). I'm talking about my case. Maybe I won't be here in a month's time because some other job has come up or because there's no money to fund what I'm doing (...). This lack of continuity makes the kids feel tired and we, as professionals, cannot do as much as we would like to (...). And then turning to the administrative side of things... because we work in this way, organisations work by projects, and if they don't have funding for projects, there is no money. And if there is no money, you don't hire people (Manager for another resource in the YMFSC network, SWOT).

The job instability of professionals affects their personal and professional lives. They cannot build a life project because their employment is volatile and insecure. Hence, they continue to look for better employment. And, professionally, they stay close to the requirements in the projects out of sheer survival, which leads them to develop a technical work, which is inappropriate in this type of cases.

As can be imagined, the recipients of these programmes ultimately suffer the consequences of all these situations, as they do not benefit from the socio-educational actions they need. That is why young people are claiming professionals who can really help them.

There are professionals who do a perfect job. They are good people. They don't forget anyone. And they want to help. Yes, they really work (Rahim, YMFSC 6, Lifeline).

Discussion and conclusions

Given the profuse and multifaceted results achieved, which speak for themselves, this section summarises the main conclusions based on the central theme discussed: *the tyranny of projects*, a barely researched aspect, on which this paper makes a significant contribution.

Spain is a Social State (Art. 1 of the Spanish Constitution), which means that it must try to ensure minimum living standards and a decent life for all people, paying particular attention to those who are at risk. The different types of social work are essential to achieve this. The social agenda is not a priority in all 'welfare states'. Spain is trying to move in this direction, but it seems that the current system, largely project-based, raises several dilemmas that prevent it from functioning more satisfactorily.

One of the main problems with this system is that socio-educational intervention is not being carried out from the integrated and holistic perspective promoted by the EU (European Anti-Poverty Network, 2021). In line with Marco et al. (2023), one of the aspects suggested is the need for coordination between the Administrations involved in these projects. Coordination that must transcend the balkanised perspective from which they are usually approached, in order to gain a broader understanding and engage ecosystemic planning that enables comprehensive solutions that not only solve existing problems, but also prevent potential ones. The analysis conducted here is an important contribution on what not to do and sheds light on how to improve the coordination and planning of social services, which also promotes a more efficient approach.

The neoliberal rationale of free market and competition underlying social action is based on economic assumptions which prevail over humanistic needs. This has a number of consequences which limit optimal implementation and possible effects on people, as has been shown.

The regular income of TSSA organisations to cover core costs seems to be insufficient for more holistic action. Part of the project budgets that are obtained are sometimes used to try to provide such action. This precariousness has consequences that directly affect social action. For example, preventing medium or long-term planning, because certainty lasts for only as long as projects do; or the continuous change of professionals due to job instability and insufficient remuneration, which can lead them to adopting a technical role, clearly unsuitable for their work in this field. As a consequence, their job satisfaction is drastically reduced (Brendel et al., 2023), which can result in burnout due to strong workloads and possible conflict between professional values and the organisational context, as also noted by Hiles et al. (2014).

In order to avoid this and to prevent the existing struggle between institutions for funding, all the administrations involved need to map their services in order to jointly

avoid duplicating efforts and inhibit competition (which restricts collaboration and coordination), and to ensure that appropriate funding is granted to all those organisations that are necessary.

It would also be desirable to promote collaboration by the use of incentives. Evidence points to the need to explore models based on collaboration (not competition) between TSSA organisations. The administrations involved should create effective coordination mechanisms to make this possible. An interesting approach would be to implement a system of impact-based funding, where organisations would be supported on the basis of their ability to propose collaborative solutions within a coherent evaluation framework. Inter-organisational support networks can also generate a more resilient ecosystem, avoiding the casualisation of work and staff.

Lastly, those in charge of Administrations and those responsible for designing calls for proposals and evaluating projects must understand that administrative logic cannot take precedence over social action. It must be understood that social reality is complex and that ignoring the phenomenological in favour of quantitative results is not a suitable approach. On the contrary, it is considered essential to rethink the model that is being applied and to design project proposals and management platforms that are coherent with the nature and demands of the reality in which social action is to be taken. There is a need to design evaluation systems that do not focus solely on numerical figures and also capture the qualitative value of interventions.

This research provides the empirical-theoretical basis to inform the policies and practices of the different levels of government and demand a change of paradigm internationally.

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TABLES

Table 1. Instruments for collecting information about both the participating young people (4 interviews with each one) and the professionals in the sector (SWOT, focus group and interview with one of them). The basic characteristics of the participants are also described.

Instrument	Participants	Position	Gender	Nationality
4 interviews with each young person	Users.			
	8 young people aged between 18 and 21 years old	Young Migrants Formerly in State Care (YMFSC)	Male	Moroccans
Focus Group and DAFO	Professional	Educator responsible for the transition to adult life programme with YMFSC	Male	Moroccan
	Professional	a YMFSC primary care expert	Male	Moroccan
	Professional	a person responsible for another resource in the YMFSC network	Female	Spanish
Interview	Professional	Project coordinator from the Third Sector Social Action (TSSA) project participant	Female	Spanish

Table 2. Categories and subcategories derived from the fieldwork conducted with young people (4 interviews per person) and with professionals in the sector (SWOT, focus Group and interview with one of them).

Category	Subcategories	Definition
The tyranny of projects	Change or maintenance of the status quo	Considerations on the purpose of the socio-educational action carried out by professionals with the YMFSC group.
	Commodification of social action	The approach taken by the administration in order to meet the complex needs of the YMFSC group is based on public calls for project funding, which leads to a number of consequences that are the subject of analysis here.
	Project logic	The rationale of the projects that directly influences their implementation by prioritising administrative and quantitative issues over socio-educational ones, which affects the quality of care provided for the YMFSC group.

Precarity	Consequence of the tyranny of projects on the employment and personal situation of professionals working with the YMFSC collective.
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