Emerging Professions in the Third Sector and Job Opportunities in Civil Society Organizations (CSO)

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In spite of the amount of research and studies that have already been done in Mexico about Civil Society Organizations, there are no proportional studies on the characteristics of their workers: the kind of professionals that work in these entities as well as the working potentiality that these organizations generate. The notable lack of empiric analysis is noticed in the missing information, mainly quantitative but also qualitative, as regards the human resources that work in the sector. Even though recent Butcher studies (2008) inform about the study on the volunteers who work in these organizations, the lack of information on paid workers does not allow to have a global vision about the sector. However, such information is becoming more and more necessary so as to know the quality and reach of the processes that mark the evolution of the organizations, contribute to solve their needs or support their development. In all, the lack of basic data makes it difficult to design an appropriate policy for the sector, which, with a global vision, would give an answer to their main needs as regards taxation, legal framework, financing, personal, etc.

In this sense, the aim of this work is to individualize these professional figures that act in the social environment, as they influence with their work not only in the raise of employment, but also in the quality of life of people, in the fight against poverty and redesigning and imposing new conditions of growth and social participation. Some information about the employment generated by the sector will also be presented.

We take as a reference the field work conducted (1) in the framework of a research project under my coordination, “Employment and its modalities in the CSOs”, made during the years 2006-2009 and financed by the CONACYT.

Professional typology and/or specializations demand

From the interviews results obtained (2), with the revision of specialized international documentation about the subject (3), the profile of the professionals required by the sector that work in civil society organizations as well as in the public administration (government) or in the private sector (in companies with social responsibility), we recognize emerging professions that are described as demands not only in Mexico but also in other realities (e.g., by classifications systems of the official professions recognized in Europe and the U.S.A. (ISCO-88 International Standard Classification Occupational del’ILO-Nazione Unite).

These new professions incorporate to the ones already acquired by workers that in general belong to several traditional professions, psychologists, anthropologists, pedagogues, lawyers, accountants, among others, but that are acquiring their own specializations of this new Third Sector.

The work they do is principally oriented to the provision of goods and services of collective (or common) interest. It does not only refer to the jobs related to sanitary, social, assistance services, but also to more general ones related to people, families, communities and educative, cultural, recreational services; environmental and urban
recovery and support services; services related to training for the job and the promotion of local development. All these tasks highlight the growing importance that day by day the Third Sector achieves, its dynamism, whether in terms of alternative organizational forms or the places of important works for a large variety of professionals that enters the sector.

But also form part of these new requirements of professionals the reform of the public administration and the new professionals incorporated fundamentally to the area of social development. Also, many companies from the private sector, committed to social responsibility, create their own departments and foundations or cooperation areas that need to incorporate specialized professionals.

So as to be able to develop the professions or specializations needed for this sector, it is necessary to define specifically these competences and abilities, specifically and coherently with the real needs of the organizations and institutions. Generally, it is about transversal competences, which have nothing to do with a specific discipline but go through many of them.

**What we understand by profession and/or specialization**

We define the profession or specialization as a set of competencies, qualifications or abilities, done to produce a particular good or service. Some professions can be obtained from a series of a tacit set of knowledge (experience) and others from instruction (formal and not formal).

A profession can be seen in the framework of their:

a) *Function*: according to the area where he or she develops his or her work (e.g., administrative, of design, evaluation, etc.)

b) *Level of autonomy/responsibility in the processes of decision making* (positions of management; intermediate positions; operators)

c) *Specialization*: it is much more transversal in spite of its specialization (e.g., a financial backer can work in various areas or functions (in administration, management, evaluation, etc.)

**Professions and/or specializations-type choice criteria**

The professions and/or specializations were chosen according to the order of importance among the ones classified by our key informers. This does not mean that many other professions that were not identified in our work have no importance or that they are not useful or meaningful, in this sense, we thought that this would be a phase that has just started and can still be developed much more.

In the process of individualization of these professional figures, transversal processes were taken into account (that had into account the functions to be developed in diverse environments whether they belong to the government, civil society organizations, or from the private sector). Those professions that are already considered traditional and
that have their own fields of specialized formation were excluded (e.g., accountants, psychologists, etc.)

The following criteria items were taken into account to make the list of professions that we presented to our key informants:

- Profiles of emerging professions in the sector of civil society organizations (e.g., fund raising specialization, among others).
- Profiles present mainly in economic areas (e.g., diagnosis, statistical methods, social economy, financial backers), that are in the government, civil society organizations and enterprise.
- Profiles that are required in the area of communication and the relations between different actors (marketing, local culture, cooperation, human resources, nets, etc.)
- Updating of profiles of those profession which already have some formation, but need to be directed towards other specialities and subjects (gender, environment, human rights, animation, educators, mediators, street educators, communities’ educators, etc.)
- Profiles relevant in terms of innovation, i.e., professional figures that have recently appeared in the working market, which respond to specialization demands and due to which there are occupation possibilities on the one hand, and on the other they lack specialized formation at the level of higher studies.

The exclusion criteria of the profiles that have not been taken into account refer, for example, to specializations that can achieve their training in other settings (such as specialization in Information and Communication Technologies). It is not that they are regarded as unimportant, but in nearly every interview, they manifested that the professionals with this kind of specialization are already hired requiring their specific competencies. The same happens with accounting specializations (balances, etc.)

The chosen areas were:

1. Project design, development and evaluation specialist.
2. CSOs management and administration specialist.
3. Communication and information and communication technologies specialist.
4. Local diagnoses, statistic methods (qualitative and quantitative analysis) specialist.
5. CSOs manager or social entrepreneur.
6. Local development agents.
7. Network coordinator.
8. Local cultural agent (education and entertainment services)
9. Social marketing specialist
10. Social Economy specialist
11. Financial backer (fund raising, communication and campaigns)
12. International cooperation specialist
13. Human Resources specialist (volunteers and paid)
14. Social sanitary and educative services expert

The results obtained are:

**The Professional Profiles demanded by the Organizations are:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart 7</th>
<th>Professional Profiles that the Civil Society Organizations demand as needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The Professional Profiles demanded by the Organizations are:
We have also investigated the educational level of the people already working in the sector. As we can see, it is an educated one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schooling</th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
<th>Paid</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cases</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Schooling</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Primary</td>
<td>3547</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Secondary</td>
<td>2365</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Preparatory</td>
<td>3350</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Technical Prof.</td>
<td>4533</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Professional</td>
<td>4927</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>19708</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>11029</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own Data
In this sense, and based on the above mentioned—according to the position they occupy within the Organization—they are demanded certain tasks that are related to the profession of every one of the members.

### Tasks Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
<th>Paid</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professionals</strong></td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>45.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Staff</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own data

### Tasks performed by the Managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settle partnerships/agreements with other institutions</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects Design and development</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund finding/Fundraising</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Decision making</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects and activities coordination</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration/management</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities Planning</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Planning</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources and Financial Management</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting organization/fiscal year budget</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper work with other institutions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion (communication/promotion)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers /employees coordination</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/beneficiaries organization</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs and results monitoring</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own data
Approaches and characteristics of the CSOs’ work

These organizations have both paid human resources and other ways of hiring (belonging to the mercantile sphere but also in a particular way as they are non profit
organizations) and volunteers (free work in the non mercantile sphere represented by the voluntary work and political militants, who are neither paid or have working dependence). If we look at chart 1, we can see that 59.5% of the workers (named in the survey in general as paid) work full time while 40.5% work part time. 22.3% of volunteers work full time and 77.7% work part time.

Chart 1
Percentage of volunteers and paid workers according to the kind of working day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Part Time</th>
<th>Full Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own data 2008. Conacyt project.

If we look at chart 2, we can see the kind of contract with which the workers called “paid” in the survey work, a 63% full time or indefinite; a 10.1% full time but temporary (probably linked to a given project); a 16.3% part or indefinite (referring to half time work); and a 10.6% part and temporal (about occasional consulting, or fee work or free lance). This is what many authors call atypical jobs compared to industrial work, permanent, under an employer and company, full time, with uncertain time contract, with social security.

Chart 2
Percentage of volunteers and paid according to the kind of contract
The works done in the CSOs receive a standard remuneration (chart 3), from the paid works with fixed salary, we could survey the following information. However, the payments done under other modalities (fees, contracts for certain projects, consulting, etc), which are better paid, are much more vulnerable.

**Chart 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salaries</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Administratives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average gross salary</td>
<td>$9,812.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$7,110.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4,666.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no written working contract in most of the cases, so in general it is work that is not exclusively regulated by the utility principles of the technical-instrumental rationality. From the point of view of work regulation, the rights of the workers are confused with those of the client (or users/beneficiary of the services). The interaction is between key actors of the productive process, this way for example, the client (user and/or beneficiary) also take part in the process, controlling the prices, the product quality, the building of conflict or consensus is continuously present. In this sense, the socio-demographic construction of the working market, the client (user and/or beneficiary) must be considered because they influence in the supply and demand of the workers and their characteristics. Also in the regulation of the work because the rights and obligations of the client (user and/or beneficiary) must be taken into account together with the rights and obligations of the organizations, that in this case operate under an employer character.

Such a peculiarity, which does not find parallelism in the private company or in the public administration, allows that these organizations can theoretically use unlimited resources, as they are in a position to know and can attract enough donations or voluntary work (Fiorentini, 1977). It must also be clear that the use of donations (and above all international cooperation) and voluntary work are not the only sources to sustain the organizations. Lately, in Mexico many of them are experiencing new ways of self-sustainability through the provision of services (sale of goods, etc) and above all,
many of them are receiving financial help from the Government so as to perform their projects. This also turns the subject of human resources difficult in many senses: the coexistence between paid and voluntary workers; market regulation; professional training of employees and volunteers; human resources management in the organization.

Working in a CSO means not only the choice of a job or career; it is mainly a choice of “being in the word in a different way”, of “sharing common goals”. Naturally, we can be in the world in a responsible way, without having to work in the world of the CSOs. But ideals and motivation constitute indispensable pre-requisites to work in the sector. It is spoken of an identity of social workers. Anyway, in many occasions it is difficult for the workers of the sector to answer the question: “What’s your job?” Their answers are from social worker, I work in a non-governmental organization as a psychologist, I’m an educator, animator, they exhibit difficulties to define what an agent of social development is (4). It is a question that evidences not only linguistic problems but a defect in the definition of the object of their work, knowledge, abilities, transversal competencies that help to characterize the professional action. This indetermination takes the workers of the sector to experience many ambiguities.

Yet, these ideals are no longer enough to perform services in an efficient way. Experience shows that the organizations need to have the added value in terms of concrete competences. It is more and more necessary for the sector to develop a definite specific professionalism, rich in operative capacity, concrete and coherent with the needs of the service they provide. Formation and training seem to be the tools with the potential to face the subject of work within the CSOs, providing the elements needed so that both the people and the organizations that work in the sector develop suitable capacities to perform in the activities they carry out and to generate the needed flows of knowledge distribution in the territory.

The individualization of these professional figures that act in the social area is becoming more and more important as they influence in their work not only in the raise of jobs, but also in the quality of life of the people, in the fight against poverty and the redesigning and imposing new growth conditions and social participation.

The task they develop is fundamentally aimed at the provision of goods and services of collective interest (or common welfare) also called “proximity services” (Laville, 1994). When producing intangible goods, services, “relational goods”, the producer, consumer, client are related (in the traditional paid work the relation is worker-employer) thus the social relations of production become complex.

The above paragraph described makes clear that they are organizations that perform within a specific, non-profit market dispensing a specific, intangible product, but also with a specific language and a culture.

**Conclusions**

The workers of the CSOs present characteristics which are significantly different from those of the workers in other sectors, both from the government and the private company. The professionals that enter the sector make up a diverse range of professionals that act in the social and economic fields (this is what we call “emerging professionals”, due to the transformations that the traditional professions experiment). They dispense intangible services with a strong relational content. The knowledge and professionalization of human resources are indispensable for the provision of these services.

Many potentialities are identified for the creation of occupation, yet, there are many challenges to face when we speak of the activity, job and work. Even though the CSOs
have grown and developed significantly during the last years, they incorporate many
human resources to their organizations, in a voluntary and paid way (with many
different approaches). Nevertheless, it is still a sector –mainly in Mexico– invisible or
little recognized as a systematized autonomous sector from its own characteristics,
where the lack of public policies that help their regularization are evident.

(1) A national survey was applied to 1078 CSOs and deep interviews to 13 CSOs’ members that occupy
different directive, professional and management positions.

(2) It was applied in the semi structured open interview to key informers where they were asked to point
as very needed (VN); needed (N) or little needed (LN) to a list of specializations, asking them to add
the ones they thought necessary.

(3) Much international bibliography about the subject was consulted: Manager & Management del Non
Profit: La Sfida Etica (AAVV) 2002; Master Internazionili in alcune discipline strategiche (1998;
Osservatorio sulle Professioni ed il Lavoro nel Non Profit (2002). Repertorio delle professioni-
non profit jobs and professional development of NPO-Italy- ASVI- Settore R&S. 2004.

(4) See report for the creation of a master for Agents of social development. Indesol 2005, coordinated
by Cristina Girardo (The Mexican College), where what is understood by an agent of social
development is defined and their needed competences, knowledge and abilities for their
professionalization.

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