

Towards evidence-based policies of the third sector? Case of Croatia

Abstract

It is becoming increasingly clear that state can't deal with all the "wicked" problems that society faces. The third sector regularly fills the space between the market (first sector) and state institutions (second sector), promoting values such as justice and solidarity while at the same time making concrete progress in the area of social inclusion and integration (European Commission, 2012).

This paper will analyse do we have evidence-based policies towards the third sector in Croatia which could provide an enabling environment for its development? The analysis will be based on the results of research carried out in the FP7 project Third Sector Impact (TSI) and the results of the research conducted in the framework of a doctoral dissertation, "The impact of the third sector on the socio-economic development of Croatia" (Bežovan et al., 2016). Both types of research were conducted using the qualitative methodology, with interviews with key stakeholders in the sector and case studies of different types of organizations in the sector. Above stated we will analyse secondary sources and particularly highlight relevant sector laws and strategies.

The first part of the paper will briefly introduce path development on third sector policies from the post-socialist transition to current developments. Development of institutional framework through relevant laws and policy documents would be articulated. In the second part of the paper more recent policy development would be analysed in detail. The case of Strategy of creating an enabling environment for civil society development 2017-2021 (which author was ex-ante evaluator) would be highlighted an example. The third part of the paper will give the insight on available evidence on the third sector, especial on impact measurement practices of the third sector (Baturina, 2016), as a possible source of sector evidence-based policies.

The discussion will reflect o character of the process development of third sector policies. The role Europeanization on the policy-making process in Croatia and changes that were introduced with it will also be considered. Together with the results of the analysis will enable us to conclude are we in Croatia moving forward towards evidence-based policies of the third sector and is current framework provides enabling environment for sectors