



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**PROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS
OF CURRENT AND FUTURE
CHALLENGES OF THE THIRD SECTOR
OF SOCIAL ACTION IN SPAIN**

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PRESENTATION

This executive summary synthesises the main results of the study “Prospective analysis of the current and future challenges of the Third Sector of Social Action (TSSA) in Spain”. The present study was conducted by the University of Alcalá for the NGO Platform of Social Action (POAS).

The implementation of this study has been possible thanks to the generous support of managers of social entities, experts and association leaders who, individually or collectively, have contributed with their knowledge, reflections and experience, to the production of information that the team has ordered and interpreted in accordance with the objectives set in the research.

This study has also benefited the advice and review of José Manuel Fresno, in addition to his coordination of the study and survey of the TSSA. The study also benefited from the advice and review of the research by Professor Manuel Pérez Yruela, of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC). Throughout its implementation, the research team has counted at all times on the support of the director of the NGO Platform of Social Action (POAS), María Luisa Gómez Crespo, and of Vanesa Cenjor, coordinator of the Active Citizenship Programme.

The detailed results of the study are available in four research papers and six working papers. The research papers are as follows: a) Overview of the current and future challenges of the TSSA in the European Union; b) Analysis of the situation, challenges and future development of the TSSA from the perspective of social organisations; c) Prospective analysis of the current and future challenges of the TSSA: survey of qualified respondents; d) Prospective analysis of the current and future challenges of the TSSA: Delphi Report.

The six working papers relating to the

challenges of the TSSA are the following: a) Social needs and new areas of activity of the TSSA; b) Positioning and relationships between TSSA, public sector and commercial sphere; c) Relationship between TSSA, social movements and new forms of participation in society; d) Social base of the TSSA; e) Sustainability of the TSSA; f) Social Innovation and TSSA.

This summary synthesises the key findings of the study of the TSSA’s prospective development, starting with a tour of the European environment of the TSSA, of which the TSSA in Spain forms an integral part. It subsequently analyses the TSSA’s situation, recent developments, consolidation process, social added value and most important limitations to its development. It then analyses the challenges of the TSSA affecting different dimensions such as the satisfaction of needs, social capital, innovation, sustainability, social base and relationships with other social actors: the State, commercial enterprises and social movements, among others. Finally, the study sheds light on the TSSA’s future, the conditions for its development and the opportunities allowing it to establish itself as a sector of sustainable entities and as a fundamental actor of social policies.

1. EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT OS TSSA'S DEVELOPMENT

1.1 COMMON FEATURES OF THE TSSA IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The development of the TSSA in Spain must be understood in the context of the recent development of the TSSA within the European Union (EU) and under the logic of the European Social Model. This model is characterised, among other features, by the development of welfare regimes in which, alongside the State and the market, the TSSA plays a crucial role and has a growing influence on the production of welfare, the defence of social rights of vulnerable groups and the development of participatory democracy (Evers & Zimmer, 2010).

Although each national welfare regime has its own institutional nature and specific development, the fact is that a recent and relative convergence in the TSSA's development has taken place, allowing reference, with all due caution, to a European area of the TSSA and, in any case, to a relatively common experience in its recent development.

The analysis of the different national cases allows us to deduce a relatively common experience characterised by: a) the consolidation of the function of service provision involving gradual professionalisation; b) a relative loss of the intensity of the civic-political function: mobilisation, advocacy, social transformation; c) a degree of functional specialisation among entities managing services and among entities dedicated to the development of civic functions, representation and dialogue; d) Growing competition of a selective nature with the business sector, alongside forms of cooperation in social inclusion projects; e) increasing competition among social entities, due to resource constraints

brought about by the financial crisis, while new forms of collaboration and networking are being developed; f) progressive orientation towards greater participation in the European social space with the support of supranational networks and platforms; g) reorientation of social intervention due to new social needs and demands, implying more complex interventions, as reflected in social and healthcare or social and labour inclusion; h) greater participation of the TSSA in the social economy as a consequence of new social needs and the requirements of more stable financing.

1.2 INFLUENCE OF TSSA ON EUROPEAN SOCIAL POLICIES

The TSSA has enhanced its presence and influence in European institutions over time and, above all, from the Lisbon Strategy 2000 to the present. In this regard, it is worth highlighting its progressive, albeit limited, **structuring** and its greater **social visibility**, which remains insufficient for the social sector itself (Frazer & Marlier, 2014). The creation of European platforms such as the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) and the Social Platform, are two examples of this structuring. Although dialogue with European institutions remains complex, it is changing and in a process of permanent construction; such structuring of the TSSA has contributed substantially to its recognition by the European institutions, as well as collaboration between them in the development of programmes for social inclusion, gender equality and combating discrimination, with the support of Structural Funds such as the European Social Fund.

Obviously, the growing social influence of the TSSA is subject to the restrictions arising from the centrality of competitiveness and,

at present, fiscal consolidation policies, which limit and condition social integration objectives (EAPN, 2014).

1.3 COMPREHENSIVENESS OF THE TSSA IN THE EUROPEAN SPACE: AN ASSET FOR EFFECTIVE SOCIAL INTERVENTION

The TSSA has proven to be a **plural sector in terms of organisations, functions, objectives and types of intervention** (Marban, 2015). If a feature defines with certainty the social sector, it is its **comprehensiveness**. Among the various functions of the TSSA, there is a logic that governs them all, that of their complementarity.

These functions, placed in relation to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, demonstrate that they can be compatible and, necessarily, mutually enriching. Thus, the ability to contribute to sustainable economic growth by the TSSA is manifested in the development of social innovation (Eriksson, Einarsson & Wijkström, 2014), a field in which it counts on a significant tradition, as well as that of social investment through job creation formulas based on the participation of workers and their professional and personal development. Its contribution to inclusive economic growth also takes place through awareness-raising on situations of exclusion, the development of social participation and environmental protection.

1.4 CAN THE TSSA CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL REFORMS AND SOCIAL RIGHTS IN THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL SPACE?

The answer to this question is clearly positive. At the same time, in order to render it possible and effective, the TSSA should develop actions oriented to consolidation and sustainability, which are deduced from national experiences and European programmes involving the social sector. Among these actions, it is worth underlining the following:

- a. Strengthen the social base of the TSSA through greater engagement with civil society, which currently finds itself in a deep process of change;
- b. Strengthen the civic-political function and the capacity for social transformation;
- c. Extend the activity of the TSSA towards organisational forms of the social economy with a view to enhancing its responsiveness to social needs and to increasing the economic and financial autonomy of the sector;
- d. Advance the structuring and visibility of the TSSA at the European level, in order to gain influence in the design of public policies, especially those that concern social services;
- e. Strengthen the recognition of the TSSA by European institutions and enhance its political impact;
- f. Promote comprehensiveness and versatility in the fields of social investment, the sustainability of social protection and employment creation systems, together with the functions of social rights advocacy, social awareness-raising and civic mobilisation;
- g. Expand its capacity to mediate between the different spheres of welfare

through civil dialogue, collaboration with commercial enterprises in social inclusion programmes and stable

actions with governments in relation to social integration policies.

TSSA OF SPAIN IN THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL SPACE

- > **The TSSA of Spain forms part of the European social space and shares a common experience** in the provision of services, the defence of social rights and the development of social participation.
- > **The TSSA of Spain participates in the development of European policies of social inclusion and support to vulnerable groups**, seeking to gain influence in their design and the effectiveness of their implementation.
- > **The TSSA of Spain is a sector with a vocation of comprehensiveness** shared with the social organisations

of the EU, contributing to social development and sustainable, inclusive and innovative growth.

- > **The TSSA of Spain can be an influential actor in European social policies, together with other national organisations of social action.** This requires that the EU's TSSA as a whole achieves progress in terms of effectiveness, transparency and sustainability.
- > **The TSSA of Spain will bolster its capacity and influence if it reinforces its social base**, improving its potential for social transformation, making progress in its structuring at the European level and achieving greater recognition on the part of European institutions.

2. CURRENT SITUATION OF TSSA IN SPAIN

The evolution of the TSSA in Spain requires a twin perspective. On the one hand, the recent historical development between 1995 and 2008, i.e. from the exit of the crisis of the early 1990s to the Great Recession of 2008, in its various dimensions of scope and size (Cabra de Luna & De Lorenzo, 2005), institutional development (Casado, 2015) and internal processes of change (Rodríguez Cabrero, 2003 and 2015). On the other, an analysis of its contemporary development and reality during the period 2008-2015, for which we can count a wide scientific literature (Aliena, 2010; Pérez Yruela & Montagut, 2012; Fundación I, Esplai, 2013; Fresno, 2014; Fundación Luis Vives, 2009 a and b, 2012; No. 30 of *Revista Española del Tercer Sector*), to which we may add the results of this prospective study, in addition to the POAS 2015 Survey.

2.1 TSSA PRIOR TO THE GREAT RECESSION

Following a period of partial reconstitution of civil society and of the social action sector itself under the favourable framework of deployment of the Welfare State (1977-1994), the decade of the 1990s entailed a long period of expansion for social action NGOs under the wings of a public sector that relied on the third sector for the provision of social services and the management of vulnerable groups' social integration problems (Rodríguez Cabrero, 2013).

Such consolidation was not only fostered by the upward economic cycle but also by the dynamics of the Spanish welfare regime which, just as welfare regimes in its vicinity, gradually configured itself as a mixed welfare system in which the market and the social sector broadened their scope, complementing the action

of a State that withdraws from the materialisation of not a few services. New ideological orientations and new forms of institutionalisation based on the logics of decentralisation, strengthening subsidiarity and the responsibility of society and individuals, represented the transition from the principle of state citizenship to another of diverse and fragmented citizenship, under which the TSSA would undergo greater development as well as greater responsibility to respond to the new social problems.

The entry of Spain into the EU in January 1986 also fostered a shift towards mixed systems of welfare that appeal to the responsibility of civil society, particularly since the Maastricht Treaty of 1992. It should be recorded in this regard that the new doctrine of the EU on social protection rests not only on the so-called modernisation of social protection systems, but also on a call to civil society to assume shared responsibilities in the fight against social exclusion through partnerships, foundations and civil society networks (European Commission, 1997). The Lisbon Strategy of 2000 and in particular the National Action Plans for Social Inclusion (NAP Inclusion) favoured the growing involvement of the TSSA in social and labour inclusion policies (Marbán Gallego and Rodríguez Cabrero, 2013). The European Social Fund became one of the mechanisms to support the social intervention of social sector entities, as has been the case of Spain's Operational Programme to Fight Against Discrimination.

Thus, the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century are regarded as a period of growth and expansion, and of broadening of the field of responsibility of the TSSA, all supported by a certain abundance of resources from the public sector. Thus, according to the POAS 2015 Survey, 60 per cent of social entities are 20 years old or over, while second and

third-level entities have also consolidated themselves. Moreover, the TSSA accounts for half of health and social activities in Spain (CNAE-2009) ⁽¹⁾, and employment in the sector as a whole has continued to grow, although it has declined among smaller entities.

During this period, the social sector consolidated its institutionalisation and social image, modernised its management capacity, albeit unevenly, and stabilised its role as provider of social services in collaboration with the public sector. At the same time, the commercial provision of social services gained momentum within the Spanish Welfare State.

2.2 IMPACT OF THE GREAT RECESSION ON SPAIN AND THE TSSA

The Great Recession that began in 2008 and, in the case of Spain, manifested itself in all its dimensions from 2009-2010, tested the responsiveness of the TSSA to address its social effects on Spanish society, especially on the most vulnerable groups. Organisations, mustering far fewer resources and obliged to curtail their expenditures (Montserrat Codorniu, 2013), had to reduce the development of promotion and prevention programmes in favour of immediate responses to the crisis.

Immediate responses were necessary in the face of the adjustments brought about by the policy of fiscal consolidation since 2010, which has involved cutbacks in social spending, and the impact of high unemployment and defaults on mortgages among numerous families.

At the same time, the crisis has also raised the TSSA's awareness of its weaknesses and threats, many of which had remained latent during its recent development. Thus,

1. National Classification of Economic Activities.

social entities have begun to address, with varying intensity, the issue of how to take advantage of the crisis in order to enhance their institutional sustainability, social credibility and political influence on social policies.

Awareness of the weaknesses and threats facing the TSSA leads entities themselves to highlight institutional deficits such as:

- a. A high degree of **atomisation and dualisation** of the sector, structured along a nucleus of large organisations and a wide range of small organisations, which condition the articulation of the sector (Ariño, 2008).
- b. **Limitation in developing operational alliances and joint actions among entities**, which are necessary for effective action. Furthermore, this limitation has been reinforced, albeit unevenly, due to some competition for scarce resources.
- c. The TSSA also considers that it has **relatively lost its capacity to create a social fabric and to structure civil society** while relatively weakening its capacity for advocacy and the defence of social rights.
- d. **Financial dependence on the State and increasing market competition** have relatively reduced the room for maneuver and the institutional capacity of the TSSA.
- e. At the same time, **its identity and mission, achieved at a high cost, have become partly blurred**. The crisis has thus brought to light a latent process of decline and demobilisation of the social base of the TSSA.
- f. Similarly, the TSSA has become aware of the need to respond to **a growing and diverse demand for social participation** in social entities by volunteers and concerned citizens targeted by social intervention.

g. **The social visibility of the actions and impact of the TSSA is limited**, partly because the sector does not present its results effectively and also because of the dispersion of the sector when presenting itself as a key actor of the welfare system or regime. This affects its institutional recognition and implies some loss of political impact.

In this new context, the TSSA is reflecting on how to achieve sustainability for the sector, not only financially but in terms of institutional capacity in order to be a relevant actor in ending the crisis: how to defend its institutional space while promoting the public space.

The onset of the Great Recession takes place in a context of organisational consolidation from above (multiplication of networks and platforms) as well as the search of a “single voice” and of greater institutional recognition. In this sense, it is acknowledged that there is a lack of awareness of the sector’s evolution and that it is necessary to strengthen its own identity while integrating to a greater degree with civil society. The crisis has intensified the tension between the functions of advocacy, performance in service provision, and of representation of the interests of the most vulnerable groups in society (Pérez Yruela & Navarro Ardoy, 2013). A tension that the TSSA considers as an inevitable and acceptable reality but that, however, requires new management modes overcoming fragmentation, financial weakness, the duplication of interventions and the difficulties in coordinating joint efforts.

At the same time, the long period of financial crisis has created new development opportunities for the TSSA that, as we discuss below in the section on the future of the TSSA, allow leaders and managers of social entities to identify alternatives that strengthen internal coordination, political and civic impact, and the sustainability of

the social sector, such as:

- a. **Intensify networking** and promote strategic alliances in order to gain effectiveness and efficiency;
- b. **Expand the connection between TSSA and the social economy** in job creation for vulnerable groups and the management of social services;
- c. **Strengthen the TSSA in rural areas** where aging and depopulation require new efforts to improve the quality of life;
- d. **Moving towards a more balanced structure of the sector through mergers, where necessary, and the creation of more efficient sizes for organisations**, which must be compatible with the inevitable heterogeneity of the social and territorial demands of the TSSA;
- e. **Build a relatively autonomous institutional space** from which to **contribute to a way out of the crisis**, promoting the objectives of the sector for greater social cohesion and a strengthening of participatory democracy.

SITUATION OF TSSA IN SPAIN

- > **The TSSA has consolidated itself as a social actor of the Spanish welfare regime** in the past three decades, providing services, defending social rights, promoting social participation and supporting different forms of social transformation.
- > **The TSSA, however, has limitations that hinder its future development, of which there is full awareness in the sector.** Among them we can mention: its high degree of atomisation; some loss of capacity to create a social fabric and structure civil society; dependence on public resources and both competitive and collaborative relationships with commercial enterprises that have yet to be balanced; a certain crisis in its social identity and mission; unmet demands in terms of participation; and low social visibility due to its dispersal and limited effectiveness in demonstrating its results.
- > The **TSSA** seeks to convert its limitations in **new opportunities for sustainable development** based on: intensify networking; expand and strengthen the connection between the TSSA and social economy; strengthen its presence and impact in rural areas and respond to emerging needs of aging, immigration and social and labour exclusion; and strengthen its institutional capacity to be a necessary and effective actor of social reform towards ending the crisis.

3. CHALLENGES FACED BY TSSA

Prior to thinking and imagining their immediate and long-term future as a sector, social entities, their managers and middle managers have reflected upon some of the TSSA's fundamental challenges, the response to which will define its future as a credible and sustainable sector.

We understand the challenges of the TSSA as those fields of action in which social entities must develop an organisational and social form capable of responding to social - aging, social, employment and technological exclusion, inequality, changes in household structures, gender equality - and civic problems - weakness of social participation and deterioration of the quality of democracy - in the coming decades.

Among all the challenges faced by the TSSA, six stand out, on which there is a broad consensus within social entities and whose diagnosis counts on a broad consensus among managers of social entities. We analyse these challenges below, both in relation to their diagnosis and to proposed solutions signalled by the TSSA itself as plausible.

3.1 GROWING AND MORE COMPLEX SOCIAL NEEDS

A) THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON SOCIAL NEEDS

The economic and financial crisis has opened up a new stage generating greater inequality and social exclusion (Ayala, 2014). In the case of TSSA entities, it has signified, on the demand side, a sudden increase of vulnerable persons' need for care, and on the supply side, scarce public

and private resources at local and national levels.

If in times of economic growth, indicators of relative poverty, material deprivation and social exclusion were already very fragile (Lorenzo, 2014), with the economic crisis these indicators have worsened, as evidenced by the reports of social entities (eg. Caritas Española and the Spanish Red Cross), especially among poor households with children, households without any type of income, and households affected by defaults on mortgages (Caritas Europa, 2014).

Furthermore, the profiles of inequality and severe exclusion have changed, spreading to segments of the population such as the middle strata that met their basic social needs prior to the crisis and who currently face social exclusion processes unprecedented in their lives. This accumulation of social needs (Gimeno Ullastres, 2015) has also occurred in a context of intensifying processes that combine as sources of inequality, such as aging, exclusion from employment, changes in the composition and functions of households and the loss of social and labour rights, among others.

However, **social needs have not merely increased but also become more complex**, meaning that the intervention of social entities has come under increased pressure to respond effectively to the social problems of the groups in the greatest situations of risk and exclusion. In fact, according to the POAS 2015 Survey, specific activities of direct intervention have increased: if in 2009 they accounted for 44% of all interventions, by 2015 they have reached nearly 53% thereof.

B) CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

In this context of growing and changing social needs, the TSSA is known to play an important role in the detection of these needs. The detection and, above all, the satisfaction of changing and complex social needs in recent years require taking on several challenges, which have been identified by social entities themselves. Among them, we ought to mention three:

- A **person-centred intervention**, more individualised but also more laborious, requiring more intense processes of needs detection and demanding a better use of resources and collaboration among entities. This requires to “*do more with less*, to be more efficient” and at the same time, to “*do more with more, that is to say, to incorporate the community*”, inviting the affected population to play a leading role in social intervention. It also requires delving deeper into different management systems based on cooperation / collaboration among entities intervening with different groups, in order to focus on the person and thereby prevent duplication in social interventions. Last but not least, it also requires a greater connection to the base of the society that is not only experiencing processes of inequality but also providing new responses to it.
- **Development of the solidarity-based economy**. The solidarity economy is highly valued by managers of social entities and social leaders as a means of economic sustainability and democratic management in the near future. The main challenge of the TSSA is to internalise and to **promote these types of experience**, without seeking leadership or paternalism but as **strategic and organisational support to disseminate them in civil society**, without overlooking that “**community spaces feed organisational and institutional spaces**”. This signifies

fostering new forms of solidarity economy and territorial and neighbourhood solidarity, by putting the organisational capital of social entities of the TSSA at the disposal of economic solidarity, in order to create a new “ecosystem within the Third Sector” and promote local or community development. However, this challenge requires additional experience by the TSSA, especially if we take into account, as evidenced by the POAS 2015 Survey, that local and community development activities have been reduced by nearly half between 2008 and 2013.

- **Development of social economy**. The social economy in its broadest sense is part of the “moral economy” of a society, that is, of those forms of production and exchange that are governed by values of reciprocity, solidarity and democracy. The challenge of developing the social economy in the TSSA is not new nor is it a result of the current crisis, bearing in mind that it was already being discussed within the TSSA from the second half of the 1990s. The engagement of the TSSA with the social economy has not reached all organisational forms (cooperatives in general, mutual societies, labour-owned companies...) but has focused above all on social cooperatives, special employment centres and insertion companies. The latter, better known at the European level as social enterprises (Alguacil, 2012; Borzaga & Tortia, 2010) are somehow rooted in non-profit social assistance and inclusion entities. The economic and financial crisis has created new development opportunities for the TSSA (Monzón & Chaves, 2012) to advance a **better relationship between the TSSA and the social economy**, whose points of connection are manifold. Both in this case as in that of the solidarity economy, managers of social entities and social experts consulted in the Delphi study coincide in that they must be sought the medium-term future.

3.2 HOW TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE FORMS OF COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN TSSA, THE STATE AND COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE

A) POSITIONING AND RELATIONS BETWEEN TSSA, THE STATE AND COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE

The prospective study and complementary information from the POAS 2015 Survey allow delineating a profile of the positioning of the three fundamental players of the Spanish welfare regime:

1. **The relationship with the State** is the quintessential relationship of the TSSA, since it receives the bulk of its funding from the State both to manage social services and to develop inclusion and equality programmes. Thus, according to the POAS 2015 Survey, 84.6% of the entities access public funding, representing 55.3% of total revenues of the social sector in 2013, although it has declined since 2008, when that percentage reached 61.3%.

The majority consensus in the social sector is to **maintain this relationship and, above all, to stabilise it in terms of both dialogue and the management of services and projects**. This implies a medium-term, multi-year relationship and is compatible with the participation of social entities in shaping social policies.

2. **The TSSA's relationship with commercial enterprise can be said to be in a take-off phase**, although selective in terms of objectives and centred at present on the relationships between large social entities, NGO platforms and large private

companies. The growth prospects of this relationship for social inclusion projects are considered as inevitable and necessary, but it will take time to overcome current cultural, ideological and organisational barriers. It must be taken into account that financing from commercial enterprises and private foundations accounted for 31% of total private financing in 2013 (19.4% of total revenues of the TSSA), growing from 23.8% in 2010.

3. **The relationship between the TSSA, the State and commercial enterprises in joint projects** under various forms of hybridisation, is currently in a **testing phase** and is encouraged by the European institutions, especially the European Social Fund. It requires not only time but changes in mentality to render this form of partnership possible or to expand the TSSA's relationships with other organisations of the social economy or the new organisations emerging from the new social movements.

B) HOW TO ADVANCE TOWARDS RELATIONS OF COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE SPHERES OF WELFARE

Three factors must be taken into account when outlining a framework for collaboration between the three spheres of welfare, for whose development some tentative proposals can be underlined:

- The **consolidation of a stable relationship between the State and the TSSA**, which is considered by some segments of the latter as a strategic partnership, is conditioned upon the internal strengthening of the TSSA, not only in relation to its mission but to aspects of internal cohesion,

organisational management and public assessment and visibility of its results and impacts.

- For its part, the relationship of the TSSA with commercial enterprise will inevitably oscillate between competition and collaboration. The first requires rules that do not exclude social entities for reasons of taxation and pricing, and give added weight and relevance to the social value of non-profit management. With regard to collaboration the commercial enterprise and the TSSA, equivalent rules are necessary. In this sense, it is necessary to collect and disseminate the best practices of collaboration that are generally found in the field of job creation for persons in situations of vulnerability and exclusion.

However, progress towards stable and effective forms of collaboration between the spheres of welfare requires that the TSSA develops its social functions in a balanced manner (Aliena, 2007), conducts organisational and management improvements in social entities (Vernis et al., 2004) and, not least, demonstrates progress in evaluating and disseminating the impact of its activity.

3.3 SOCIAL BASE IN A PROCESS OF CHANGE

A) CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL BASE AND DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTEERING

The recent literature reviewed (Díe & Jaráiz, 2014; Fundación I, Esplai, 2013) and the prospective study corroborate the fact that the social base of the TSSA is undergoing change, whereby new forms of participation in the solidarity and collaborative economy

and the increase in number, and in diversity of commitments, of voluntary action coexist with the weakening of the traditional associative space.

In the case of volunteering, the economic crisis has increased the proportion of social entities that count on volunteers (this is corroborated by the POAS 2015 Survey with a 45.7% increase in the number of volunteers between 2008 and 2013). At the same time, the ambivalence of volunteering has been accentuated (Zurdo Alaguero, 2003) between task-centred volunteering, involving more punctual forms of commitment, less politicised and oriented to the provision of services, and volunteering with a mission, interested in social transformation and actively participating in the internal life of organisations. Paradoxically, a greater number of volunteers has not implied a strengthening of the TSSA's social base and that its "transformative ambition" (L'Esplai Foundation, 2013) is sufficient to commit to the defence of a model of social rights.

The growth of volunteering has been of great help in social intervention. However, this inflow must be taken advantage of to improve volunteers' integration and involvement in social entities while preventing risks of de-professionalisation.

How can the TSSA reverse this situation? There is no comprehensive, nor at least minimally articulated, strategy by the TSSA to adapt to such changes in the social base or to attract the growing number of volunteers with a mission engendered by the economic crisis. There is, however, a broad consensus on the need to promote the **active participation of volunteers in decision-making**, to develop flexible forms of volunteering and to promote a more important role for citizens affected by deficiencies in the design of the intervention programmes.

B) STRENGTHEN THE RELATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE TSSA

There is an imbalance in the TSSA between the service provision-managerial approach and the relational approach, which may imply a distancing from its social base. This is due to several factors including: a) the lack of adaptation of the TSSA to new and more complex spaces of participation in the solidarity and collaborative economy, which are booming with the economic crisis; b) scarce permeability of the organisational structures of the TSSA to the entry of new profiles of volunteers with a mission in the sector's structures; c) some unresolved imbalance between a weakening mission and an overemphasised organisation.

For the TSSA to effectively expand and reinforce its social base, it needs a rebalancing between the needs of the mission and the needs of the organization. In other words, it must re-articulate the organisation and strengthen the mission. Rearticulating the organisation implies that aspects such as networking, innovation, transparency (financial and internal democracy) or the development of social economy and collaborative economy formulas are oriented towards the mission of the TSSA as much as, or more than, the production of services.

On the other hand, strengthening the mission implies advancing in the defence of social rights; developing social participation and participatory democracy (Mora, 2013); enhancing political influence by advocating rights and strengthening alliances with grassroots organisations, trade unions and social movements; increasing internal participation; and the development of volunteering, connecting it with the mission of the entity.

3.4 THE TSSA HAS ITS ORIGINS IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND IS A REFERENCE POINT OF THEIR INSTITUTIONALISATION

A) THE TSSA AS A SPACE AND AGENT OF SOCIAL MOBILISATION

The Spanish TSSA has expressed on many occasions its aspiration and vocation to establish itself as space of participation in public affairs at the service of building an inclusive citizenship.

Thus, the second Strategic Plan of the Third Sector of Social Action 2013-2016 indicated as priorities, "in the first place, to ensure the provision of goods and services by the Third Sector of Social Action to vulnerable persons and groups, and secondly, to increase the political and social impact of the Third Sector on the basis of its strengthening as a social actor." Meanwhile, the "Diagnosis of the Third Sector of Social Action" detected that the 2008 crisis fostered the emergence of new social movements and a new phase of social protest, indicating an epochal change and pointing to a necessary change in the nature of the TSSA. The diagnosis thus states that "it can be asserted that the stage of participation and social organisation in Spain has changed dramatically... the sector has not elaborated a discourse to analyse the impact of new forms of social participation on their action or on their proposals. It manifests that it has felt marginalised and lacks a strong posture regarding the new social movements."

The Strategic Plan identified two "immediate problems, weak political impact of the TSSA and limited articulation of its relationship with civil society". However, it remains to be understood in more depth how and why these problems have come about and how to change the situation. This obliges the TSSA to rethink

itself as a social actor in the current context of profound social and political transformation, looking both inward (needs of the social sector) and outwards (needs of society); looking to organisation - preventing corporatisation tendencies - and looking to society - overcoming mere mobilisation tendencies. Such dual nature, organisation and movement, implies a permanent tension in the development of the TSSA, and under certain circumstances can generate contradictions. This is what the study has referred to as “the two souls of the TSSA”.

B) RECONCILING THE TWO SOULS OF THE TSSA

In the face of the current crisis and its impact on the TSSA and on the development of its functions, there are various alternatives.

- One is the repoliticisation alternative, which would consist in strengthening the transformative dimension of the TSSA (Arnanz & Barba, eds., 2015), although it may imply putting the capacity for dialogue with public administrations at risk: a gain in advocacy capacity accompanied by a loss in capacity for influence. However, this alternative does not achieve broad consensus, which does not mean that the social sector as a whole does not support greater political impact on the elaboration of social policies or does not consider that the mobilisation of the sector is a means of action under certain circumstances.
- The second alternative would be to draw a clear division of labour between social movements and the TSSA, as a form of articulated differentiation, so that each space assumes its own vocation and function, learning to collaborate more and better. This perspective values positively the potential contributions of social movements and initiatives to the

TSSA, conceiving them not as a space of competition but rather as an opportunity for mutual learning and reinforcement.

- The third alternative is the reintegration of the two souls of the TSSA. The current crisis is a window of opportunity to recover the true pulse of the sector. This implies articulating activities of quality service provision for vulnerable groups and society in general and actions leading to social promotion, greater social participation and social transformation.

3.5 SOCIAL INNOVATION AS ORGANISATIONAL AND SOCIAL ADDED VALUE

A) SOCIAL INNOVATION: BETWEEN DISCOURSE AND REALITY

The TSSA has adopted the discourse of social innovation but its development remains insufficient and its impact limited. The critical mass and organisational framework required to reinvent and transform the welfare system have not fulfilled their expected potential.

In Spain, the intersection or contact remains limited between the sphere of the TSSA, self-defined and structured as such, and the sphere of social innovation, self-defined and structured as such, or the sphere of self-managed experiences and social innovation alternatives. Arguably, the part of the TSSA that undertakes, to some degree, social innovation makes it *unwittingly*, and social innovation occurs more when organisations are less formally incorporated in the TSSA, except in the sphere of the alternative and solidarity economy where the TSSA achieves more social innovation (whether or not it is defined as such) in terms of community

self-management or alternative practices stimulated by the crisis. Therefore, the more radical and civilizing the contribution of social initiative needs to be, the more entrenched the TSSA is in the established institutions. The more real and deep social innovation needs to be, the less likely it becomes.

B) HOW TO MAKE PROGRESS IN SOCIAL INNOVATION

What role can social innovation play as an end and as a means for the TSSA's strategy for the future? How can an agenda of social innovation be developed for the TSSA?

An agenda of social innovation for the TSSA must be constructed, shared and developed at the micro- (through proximity to community vulnerability and resilience), meso- (through organisational and management capacity) and macro- levels (through a political and ethical discourse and impact), both locally and globally (Montagut, 2014), both in so-called slow burning processes, crises and changes of pace and fast burning processes, both in the ability to consolidate innovations in relatively closed or protected spaces and to open them to hybrid dialogues and influences. Therefore, a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, ongoing communication and support structures for processes are necessary.

Synergies between the technological and social dimensions of innovation should be explored. Faced with a traditional TSSA, supposedly specialised in standardised assistance to supposedly compartmentalised and watertight population groups, it would be a matter of **promoting social innovations at the community and intersectoral levels**. Synergies emerge through citizen participation and open government of such social policies and pro-welfare

actions, whereby it is possible to enhance both personalisation and community-building, decentralisation and coordination, individual and collective empowerment via the use of advanced information and communication technologies, in particular Internet.

In any case, this should be part of a broader strategy in which the TSAS shall:

- a. Restructure its relationship with the public sector and the market: building autonomy, capacity for dialogue and ability to offer innovative proposals;
- b. Organisational and economic re-adjustment: divesting activities with low differential added value; alliances or mergers in some cases; diversifying activities; going beyond the original target group; or changing the funding model;
- c. Diversify and increase the visibility of TSSA networks: committing to a mixture of different types of organisations (more and less professionalised, smaller and larger, more and less politicised, more and less community-oriented) seeking greater and better social positioning and impact;
- d. Aspire to convert the TSSA into the main laboratory of true social innovation for the sustainability of life, given that care, insertion, entrepreneurship, coexistence and participation require pilot experiences, good practices, demonstration effects and shareable evidence. To this purpose, immersion in management networks and the dissemination of knowledge and collaboration between the Third Sector, universities and research centres are of fundamental importance.

3.6 THE TSSA AS SUSTAINABLE INSTITUTIONAL SPACE

A) THE TSSA REQUIRES A SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA

The TSSA is a sector of low future sustainability if it does not adopt a resolute strategy to be a credible and solvent actor in the development of social policies. To this purpose, it must commit to defining and pursuing an agenda of “**shared sustainability**” among all its organizations that is “**open**” to the necessary collaboration and alliances with civil society and the State.

This agenda, translatable into joint strategies such as existing ones (Strategic Plan of the TSSA 2013-2016 and other sectoral strategies concerning disability, children, the elderly, Roma, among others), requires a more extensive and thorough debate within the sector itself to plan for the future.

Advancing sustainability involves a combination and integration of the objective of social transformation with effective institutional, organisational and financial capacity.

B) HOW TO ENABLE SUSTAINABILITY

A sustainability agenda, following the thinking of managers of social entities, implies acting on three levels:

1. Financial:

- **Diversifying funding sources**, new relationships with the business sector and the improvement of gift taxation. Also, developing more sustainable projects.

- **Stability of public funding** through multi-year budgets for the provision of essential services and for medium term intervention programmes, via social dialogue.
- **Generalisation and consolidation of social clauses in public procurement.**
- **Creation of stable forms of access to credit** through specific lines of public financing, the creation of special ad hoc funds for social sector funding and improved access to private credit.
- **Change in VAT rules** so that social organisations, just as commercial enterprises, can both charge and offset it.

2. Organisational:

- **Networking** through formulas such as the joint presentation of social entities to projects and contracts; creating Temporary Unions of Entities; share training, professional and physical and technological infrastructure; or the use of large purchasing groups.
- **New forms of public-private partnership.** That is, forms of collaboration allowing the development of medium-term activities and social programmes. This may involve forms of stable alliance around concrete projects as well as new forms of organisation of mixed character.
- **Improvements in organisational management** to strengthen the professional dimension of social entities in its broadest sense. In this matter, improving the optimal size of entities is an urgent challenge.
- **Mergers.** In many cases, it is necessary to advance the merger of small entities developing similar activities within the same sector, in order to improve economies of scale and the capacity for social intervention as well as access to resources.

3. Institutional:

- **Transparency and accountability.** It is one of the elements supporting the visibility of entities, responding to the questions of who they are and what they do.
- **Assessment of social impact.** Spanish society is aware, albeit to a limited extent, of the existence of NGOs and of their solidarity activities and support to vulnerable groups, but they have little or no knowledge of the true impact of their activities. Therefore, social entities must develop common protocols or impact measurement systems, which account not only for the coverage of the needs of different social groups, but also include direct indicators of inclusion and welfare and indirect indicators of social cohesion and economic development.
- **Strengthening links with civil society.** Connection with civil society is crucial for the sustainability of the sector through the enhancement of its relationship

with social movements, improving internal participation of members and volunteers in the entities, openness to the social economy, strengthening the social dialogue and greater interaction with other organisations of civil society. In this sense, it is worth highlighting the importance of connecting the TSSA with civic initiatives of elementary solidarity (Alberich, 2012).

- **Claiming greater recognition of the TSSA** to the extent that it develops a social function that is more necessary than ever in the face of the containment and withdrawal of the State in different areas of welfare production. The crisis has highlighted the significance of the TSSA as an actor to combat vulnerability and exclusion and, in general, social inequalities. Legal recognition through new laws governing the TSSA and volunteering in 2015 is a positive, yet insufficient, step in the direction of the recognition of the social sector.

CHALLENGES OF TSSA

1. The TSSA responds to **growing and, above all, more complex social needs** as a result of increasing inequality and exclusion since 2008. To this purpose, it needs to develop an **intervention logic centred on the person, to “do more with less, to be more efficient”**, and at the same time, to **“do more with more, that is to say, to incorporate the community”**. It must also develop the solidarity economy to create a new “ecosystem within the Third Sector” and foster local or community development. Finally, it has to broaden the space of the social economy.
2. The TSSA is an autonomous sphere of welfare with a long tradition of **cooperation with the State**. In the coming years the TSSA must consolidate a stable relationship with the State around the development of social policies of equality, inclusion and non-discrimination. The relationship of the TSSA with commercial enterprise will inevitably oscillate between competition in service management and collaboration in projects of social and labour inclusion.
3. The TSSA must develop a comprehensive and coordinated strategy to adapt to **changes in its social base and update its vision of volunteering**. To this purpose, it must establish deeper and more stable connections to civil society (associations and social movements, etc.); enhance the permanent linkages of persons (users, families, volunteers) with entities; and build closer links with the local level.

It is necessary to promote the active participation of volunteers in decision

making, develop flexible forms of volunteering and promote a greater role for citizens in the design of intervention programmes.

4. The TSSA **has the vocation to establish itself as a space for participation** in public affairs at the service of building an inclusive citizenship. This obliges the TSSA to rethink itself as social actor in the current context of profound social and political transformation. In this endeavour, the TSSA must try to reconcile its “two souls”: service provision and the objective of social transformation.
5. The TSSA has adopted the **discourse of social innovation but its development remains insufficient and of limited impact**. It should aim to convert itself into the main laboratory of true social innovation for the sustainability of life, since care, insertion, entrepreneurship, coexistence and participation require pilot experiences, good practices, demonstration effects and shareable evidence.
6. The TSSA must **build sustainability that is shared internally and open to the support of civil society**. To this end, a comprehensive strategy of measures in the financial (diversifying funding sources, new relationships with the business sector and the improvement of gift taxation, developing more sustainable projects, consolidation of social clauses, access to credit), organisational (enhance networking, new forms of partnership, management improvements, mergers between entities) and institutional fields (transparency and accountability, assessment of the social impact of its activities and greater social and political recognition).

4. FUTURE OF TSSA. TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE SECTOR AND A FUNDAMENTAL ACTOR OF SOCIAL POLICIES

4.1 THE TSSA DEVELOPS AND INTEGRATES TWO LOGICS OF ACTION

“The added value of the TSSA is to create society... to create the social conditions of social inclusion and accessibility”
(Manager of social entity)

This statement condenses to a large extent the different objectives developed by the TSSA: advocacy, service provision and social transformation, as well as the present and future challenges it faces.

As noted by the social entities themselves, these general objectives are specified in the development of two logics or souls:

a) On the one hand, the development of the “logic of the mission” or the “creation of spaces for rights” in society, which encompasses the defence of social rights, social participation and strengthening civil society, and achieving political impact;

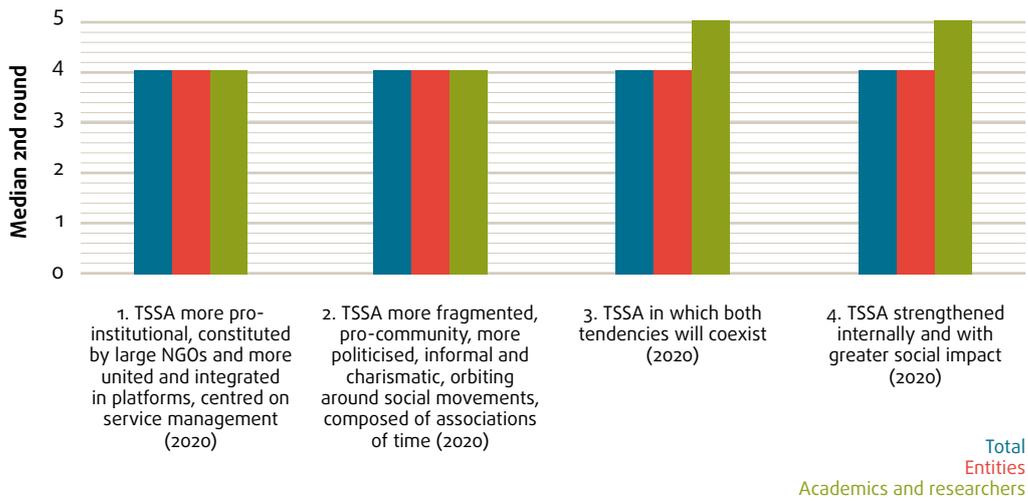
b) On the other, the development of the “logic of organization” or developing “new ways of doing things”, which comprises the development of networking, improving innovation, increasing social visibility, demonstrating the impact of activities, developing new forms of collaboration with the State, business and civil society, supporting economic solidarity and making greater efforts in the field of the social economy at the service of sustainable projects and programmes.

The two souls or two logics of the TSSA articulate and integrate each other, not without difficulty and with a great diversity among sectors and organisations. It is for this reason that, first, the TSSA should deepen its knowledge of its own internal

diversity in order to make it serve the common objectives of the sector; and, second, move towards forms of pragmatic integration of the two logics, adapting to different social needs.

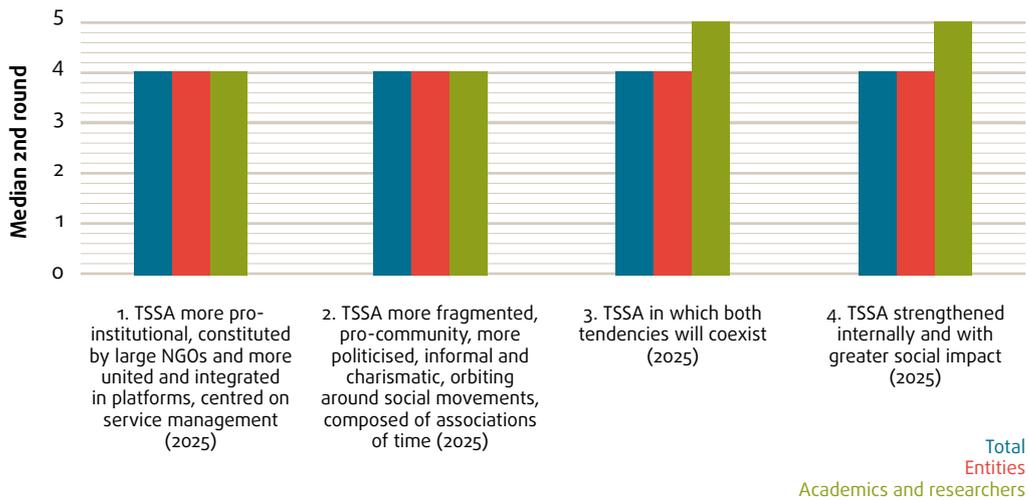
In the Delphi study these two logics are termed: pro-institutional logic (field of organisation and provision) and pro-community logic (field of the mission and social transformation). In actual practice, both logics intermingle and develop together, but almost always unevenly depending on the type of sector and activity. This is evident in both Figures 1 and 2. In both 2020 and 2025, managers and experts consider the coexistence of both logics as a future trend, as a common rationale of the TSSA. At the same time, they perceive that the TSSA will emerge from the crisis as a stronger sector achieving greater social impact.

Figure 1: General perception of the TSSA in the medium term (2020)



Source: Compilation from results of Delphi study (2nd round)

Figure 2: General perception of the TSSA in the long term (2025)



Source: Compilation from results of Delphi study (2nd round)

4.2 COLLABORATION BETWEEN SOCIAL ENTITIES AS A CONDITION OF THE FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE TSSA

Both the POAS 2015 Survey and the qualitative prospective studies carried out highlight that the internal strengthening of the TSSA is a central objective to achieve future sustainability. Achieving such strengthening requires the combination

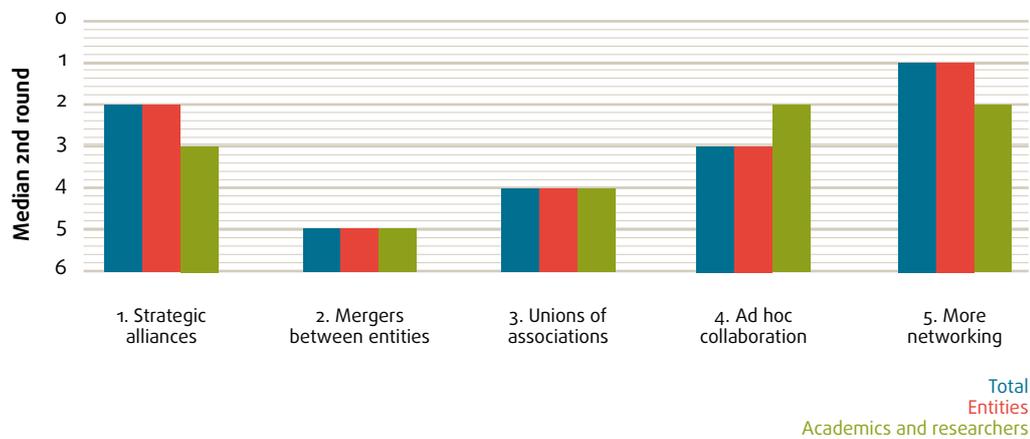
of different strategies and processes of change ranging from financial sustainability to networking, through greater professionalisation of the sector and the development of sustainable projects oriented to clear and effective social outcomes.

A general condition of the strengthening of the sector is the collaboration between social entities. Indeed, the latter is already a reality but remains limited by

the very fragmentation of the sector, the diversity of interests and organisational cultures with very different origins and developments. Networking, which is part of the discourse of entities, takes multiple forms as noted above, such as temporary unions to develop joint programmes, large purchasing groups, joint training, among others. However, there remains a long way to go in this direction.

In any case, managers and experts perceive that in the medium term (2020), networking will be more important than ad hoc collaboration, unions of associations and mergers. Only strategic alliances are assigned almost equal importance as networking (Figure 3). However, by the year 2025, that is, in 10 years' time, managers and experts consider that **strategic alliances** within the industry will come to the fore, which signifies a higher form of development than networking.

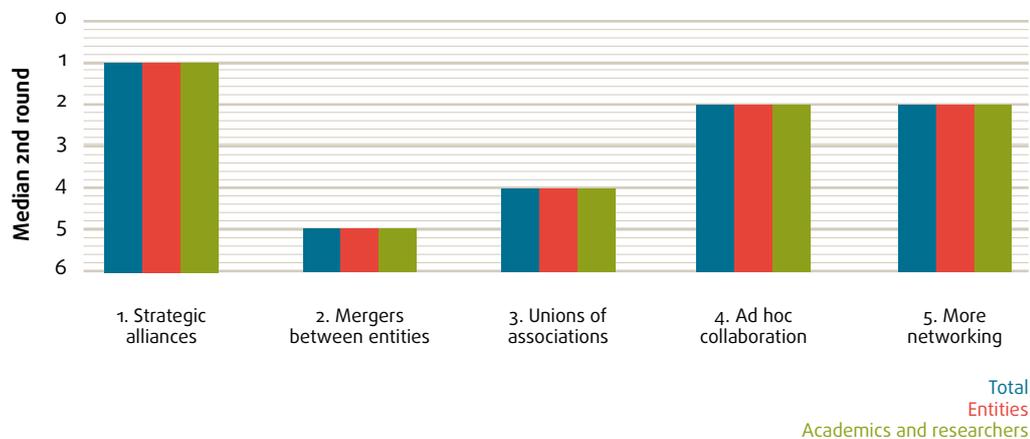
Figure 3: In the future, what will be the direction of collaboration between TSSA entities? (in 2020)



Source: Compilation from results of Delphi study (2nd round)

Note: Value of median= 1: most important; 5: least important (among the five chosen items)

Figure 4: In the future, what will be the direction of collaboration between TSSA entities? (in 2025)



Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de resultados del estudio Delphi (2ª ronda)

Nota: Valor de la mediana= 1: el más importante, 5 el menos importante (entre los 5 ítem elegidos)

4.3 FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE TSSA IN SPAIN

The future of the TSSA depends not only on the evolution of the Spanish welfare regime or system, the development of the “European social model” and the social space itself of the TSSA of EU member countries. These are inevitable conditioning frameworks to which the TSSA must adapt while modulating and changing them according to its capacity to influence the various institutional and social actors. However, the future of the TSSA depends above all upon itself, that is, the extent to which it is able to create the social and institutional conditions to be a necessary actor in ending the crisis and the extent to which it advances its sustainability.

These limits and this potential imply that the TSSA needs to strengthen and rebalance its functions of service provision, defence of social rights and democratic development, while bolstering its capacity for social transformation, i.e. generating values of solidarity and creating conditions conducive to active and responsible citizenship.

The TSSA must be a permanent laboratory of social participation, promote internal professional and civic leadership, create relations of cooperation with the State based on stability and constructive criticism, foster entrepreneurial actions aimed at social and labour inclusion, connect and collaborate with social movements and platforms and, finally, undertake new developments in the field of the social and solidarity economy.

In the Delphi study, managers and experts consider the following as the most important medium-term challenges of the TSSA (year 2020): strengthening the civic culture of the sector, achieving greater political impact, raising the awareness of society of the need for principles of equality and social justice to take precedence over competition. These challenges are followed

in importance by: generating social capital, collaborating with other stakeholders and achieving a stable funding system. These challenges are seen as persisting through 2025, although more importance is assigned to making society aware of the added value of the TSSA and strengthening the focus on the person and the defence of rights and actions aimed at inclusion social are. All these challenges are situated in the area of substantive objectives of the TSSA. A precondition of these is to achieve a sustainability that is shared among entities and open to civil society and the State.

The look into the future is necessarily normative and takes place in a horizon that is conditioned and full of uncertainties.

The analysis of the past and recent situation of the TSSA generates an assessment of positive development in which deficiencies and capacities coincide, as analysed earlier. The TSSA has become a social actor in the provision of social services, the defence of the most vulnerable groups and the development of social rights. The current crisis has put a great strain on the sector due to the growth of social needs and limited resources; it has also shed light on the urgent need to strengthen internal networks and forge external alliances, while revitalising the capacity for social advocacy and actively developing social participation. The sector recognises its limitations in relation to the latter two aspects. In order to exit the crisis, **“the development of participatory democracy is key... both inwards and outwards of entities. The Third Sector must be a laboratory of participation”**. To this purpose, the TSSA must rest on three pillars: economic sufficiency, which does not necessarily mean profitability, permanent bonding of persons (users, families, volunteers, civil society) with entities and finally, stable connections with civil society (associations, social movements, etc.) as well as the State.

In recent years, changes necessary to strengthen the future role of the TSSA have

been taking place, such as leadership and of a generational type, a greater orientation toward the participation of persons and further development of social capital in order to, among others objectives, expand a social base that had stalled. These changes affect, in general, all social entities and their achievement is necessary to prepare the immediate future of the social sector.

The Law of the TSSA, adopted in 2015 ⁽²⁾, is a regulatory framework that will undoubtedly promote the development of the social sector but, in itself, has no immediate transformational effects. The law implies a public recognition of the TSSA and creates a more favourable and legitimate institutional framework for its development. Nevertheless, the future must be conquered by the TSSA in the coming years by contributing to **social and territorial cohesion, strengthening democracy, achieving greater political impact, collaborating with other sectors such as social movements and developing the social economy.**

In the near future, the TSSA will have to maintain and enhance the quality service

2. Act on the Social Action Third Sector (Law 43/2015, 9th October, BOE 10th.10.2015).

provision, personalise its attention and give increased weight to promotion, internal social participation and the development of participatory democracy. At the same time, the TSSA must act as the loudspeaker of unmet needs, especially those of the most vulnerable groups.

In ending the crisis, the TSSA must vindicate itself through proposals to advance social rights, in a context in which the restructuring of the welfare state and the expansion of the market for public services does not favour the development of the TSSA. This does not obstruct the opportunity to develop actions based on solidarity, if the TSSA achieves sustainability and openness to new forms of collaboration with civil society organisations. On the contrary, to advance these two conditions – sustainability and strengthening the connection with civil society – the TSSA will be better able to develop both its immediate objectives: providing quality services and advocacy; and medium-term objectives: be a necessary actor in ending the current crisis on the basis of solidarity and a sphere crucial to the development of future social reform.

FUTURE OF THE TSSA

1. **The TSSA integrates two “souls” or logics of action that it permanently develops and adapts to the satisfaction of the social needs of vulnerable groups:** the logic of social transformation, social participation and political impact on the one hand, and the logic of quality service provision, innovation, networking and the development of sustainable projects on the other.
2. **Collaboration between social entities** is a prerequisite of the TSSA’s future

sustainability. This involves a wide development field ranging from networking to strategic alliances.

3. **The TSSA has opportunities for future development if it can advance sustainability and enhance its connection with civil society.** These conditions make it possible to achieve the TSSA’s immediate objectives: providing quality services and rights advocacy; and medium-term objectives: be a necessary actor in ending the current crisis on the basis of solidarity and a sphere crucial to the development of future social reform.

5. CONCLUSIONS

a. The relevance of this study can be synthesised in four fundamental ideas.

In the first place, the TSSA of Spain is conditioned by the European social space of the TSSA. This space is driven to expand and, consequently, will be the framework for action, experimentation and development under which social intervention will take place and will act as a potential influence on social policies; it is a space that will have to reconcile the supranational level with national and local levels.

Secondly, the Great Recession has had a wide-ranging economic, social and political impact in Spain. Social entities, from a previous process of expansion and consolidation, have had to respond to the social crisis with diminishing resources, putting strain on organisations. In addition, social entities have been able to visualise and gain awareness of existing shortcomings with regard to mission and organisational quality, which originate in the consolidation period running between 1990 and 2007.

Third, awareness of these deficits has translated into the need to respond to future challenges such as the reconstruction of the social base, the connection with social movements, the development of associative social capital, the relationship between the TSSA, the State and the commercial sector, the development of innovation and the sustainability of the sector.

Finally, the TSSA looks to the future with confidence that the crisis has opened up opportunities to develop the sector and that it can continue to create added value – create an inclusive society. These opportunities require two pre-conditions: a social sector defined by a greater degree of articulation, networking and committed to internal strategic alliances as the

foundation of its sustainability, but also a sector that has to rebalance its different social functions in order to be an actor for the future.

b. In conducting this prospective study, we found that social entities are heavily conditioned by the constraints of the present. Therefore, providing immediate responses to the problems of society, adjusting resources to achieve this commitment and opening the field of institutional connections to facilitate financing and achieve its objectives are goals that consume an important part of the sector's organisational energy.

This has not prevented, as we have seen, debate and reflection on the future of social entities in a social and economic environment of profound change. However, the question remains as to what extent the TSSA as a whole has become fully aware of changes in social needs, of the political, social and technological mutations that we are experiencing, and of the challenge that the current epochal change implies for the TSSA. Certainly, the problems raised by social entities in the present study can reasonably be solved, to a greater or lesser extent.

This said, it can be concluded from this study that the magnitude and intensity of the social changes under way will force social entities to collectively increase their investment in knowledge and discussion of the social reality in order to anticipate and plan for the future, as far as possible. Only in this way can the TSSA be a sustainable sector and a necessary social actor.

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7. DATA SET

This executive summary is based on four research studies and six working papers, the data sources of which were as follows:

- Realisation of 6 focus groups involving the managers and directors of 43 social action entities of Barcelona, Bilbao, Madrid, Seville and Zaragoza.
- Realisation of 21 semi-structured interviews with NGO managers, TSSA experts and policy-makers.
- Realisation of Delphi study involving 31 NGO managers and TSSA experts.

The four baseline studies and six working papers mentioned in the presentation are available on the website of the NGO Platform of Social Action (POAS).

