Full title of the manuscript: The importance of training in social organizations’ due to COVID-19 pandemic challenges

Short title of the manuscript: TRSO-19 CHALLENGES

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Abstract
This work presents the grounding behind ongoing research. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, declared by World Health Organization, being the Residential Structures for the Elderly confined, the workers in solitary confinement, and the elderly without any visits, we started this research which aims to assess the effects of online training and activities, mainly on reducing the stress levels of workers and elderly, the loneliness feeling among the elderly, and the workers’ engagement. Using technologies, and with the contributions from a multidisciplinary team, we built some resources to minimize the pandemic effects in seniors and workers of Residential Structures for the Elderly. All the materials were placed in a document repository created for the purpose, so they could be accessed whenever necessary, especially at a time that could ease the heavy task experienced by workers in these structures and when it was possible to accompany the residents, as some tasks require assistance and instruction in their accomplishment.

The research project team, which has been running since March 2020, intends that in 2021 this project becomes a virtual resource center, available for all national social organizations, after carrying out all the proposed and verified changes by the analysis of the protocol built for this purpose. This project will be a repository for good practices, offering a set of tools and activities, recorded and in real time, available for all the organizations in the social sector, but above all for most isolated and with the least economic resources.

Keywords: stress levels, loneliness; engagement; online training.

Introduction
Throughout life, in personal and professional context, we are confronted with new realities that require from us the ability to assume different perspectives and new ways of dealing with those same realities. This permanent process may be named as lifelong learning and, at the professional level, we can say that it constitutes the “directory” of training needs that we all feel in organizational domain, and which should be met, in the clear sense of being able to rise to a new level of competitiveness. Professional training is defined, therefore, as a set of processes that allow the individual to acquire and develop the necessary skills for the proper performance of their activity, which means
that there should be two direct stakeholders: the individual and the organization where he develops his activity.

_Pandemic Challenges in Social Organizations_

Science crosses itself, in various situations of humanity’s development, with the premise that all the crises exacerbate what is somehow “asleep”. This idea is valid for the human being itself, but also the contexts where he develops and relates to others.

The evolution of COVID-19 Pandemic proved to be one of the biggest crises ever imposed to human beings, perhaps being the biggest one that we face in this century. The feeling of constant uncertainty, the advances, and setbacks of science towards a cure that still seems distant, the lack of certainties about how long it will last and what will remain of it, force human being to face daily challenges and a so-called “new reality” that changes every day.

In fact, what this pandemic crisis brought us was, among many other things, the exacerbation of some pre-existing problems, and some new others that have arisen, which have been difficult for us to deal with, whether in our personal lives, or in our profession and relations.

Ever since before the pandemic there are already social organizations with few resources (financial, material, but above all, human resources), with exhausted workers, presenting very high levels of burnout (an average value of 53,4% for male workers and 58,9% for female workers). Nonetheless, these workers show huge capacity to reinvent their professions in constant solutions, and work hard with the little they have access to. Simultaneously, the families are increasingly demanding, elderly people who are getting more dependent, and workers whose motivation is mostly the great sense of engagement.

The preliminary investigation predicts life satisfaction as another individual factor that can lead the level of burnout and work commitment (engagement) to vary. Those who are satisfied with their lives show lower levels of burnout (M = 56,1%) compared to those who are not satisfied (M = 65,5%). This difference is also observed in work commitment, and the professionals who feel more satisfied with their lives show more commitment to work (M = 78,2%) compared to those who are not satisfied (M = 62,5%). However, there seems to be no differences considering coping strategies. Workers who feel
supported by their leadership also have lower levels of burnout (M=55.3%) when compared to those who do not feel supported (M = 63%), also verifying a much higher work commitment among professionals who feel supported by their leadership (M = 81.3%).

So, what has changed with this pandemic crisis? At first glance, it may seem so little, but quickly we can conclude that the truth is, today, we have more worn-out human resources, more isolated elderly people with abandonment and loneliness feelings, and deep down, social organizations with difficulties in the task of mobilizing their resources to face, not just the daily challenges, but also those that the pandemic did not suspend and have long been its reality.

If, on one hand, we have workers (from health assistants to technicians) whose resilience is daily tested, with real difficulties on regulating their emotions so they can activate effective and essential coping strategies every minute, with difficulties in managing the available resources, in activating the contingency plans and promoting the safety of them all, with real gaps on communication strategies, several limitations that are reflected in the ability to lead and motivate their teams; on the other hand, we have elderly people who demand more than these workers already give of themselves daily, increasingly limited, dependent, sad and isolated.

Also, we still have the same challenges we’ve always had, but with the increased difficulty for the organization’s managers: a pandemic crisis that did not suspend the General Data Protection Regime (GDPR), contractual issues, the legislation that is constantly changing, recruitment and hiring, sometimes, “against the clock”, the performance evaluation that remains essential, the activities and services that are still necessary, and a constant difficulty in responding to everyone at a slower pace than desirable.

What has changed, in fact, seems to be little, but what needs to change is a lot. Therefore, now more than ever, there is a need for workers’ training and qualification, to have technicians and managers capable of working in a common direction, with purposes and objectives that intersect in the most important: the best answers for those whose well-being had been entrusted to them.
Importance of Training During Pandemic Challenges

In a context of changes and pressures, knowledge is seen as a key factor for organizations, being considered a “raw material” that will foster innovation, creativity, and quality, thus contributing to the organization’s progress. In this scope, consider that knowledge is the information that changes something or someone; both by becoming the basis for the action, and by making an individual or organization capable of different and more effective actions. Training allows individuals to acquire skills and put their knowledge at service for a concrete business project. An organization with employees who can systematically apply the skills and knowledge acquired by training actions in their work contexts, is in a better position to provide greater productivity, a participatory and motivating environment, and then, more oriented towards achieving the desired objectives.

The current time, often referred to as the “knowledge age”, is the scene of a constant development of knowledge in all the areas, motivated by the speed of changes that characterize the current functioning of organizations, which consequently brings outdated the knowledge that we already have. According to the same authors, organizations are permanently at risk of losing their skills if they neglect the training of their workers. In this sense, it is inevitable that organizations provide training to their employees to keep them updated, and thereby contribute to a more competitive and refreshed organization.

Training has therefore advantages at both individual and organizational level. At the individual level, the author states that there is a development and satisfaction of workers due to the addition of skills, greater career opportunities, better remuneration, or personal and professional fulfillment. Regarding the advantages of training for the organization, although it is not easy to quantify the value of training in organizations, presents as an advantage the reinforcement of the organization strategic capacity due to the greater readiness to achieve objectives, greater effectiveness and efficiency results, greater capacity for innovation in responding to customer needs, and by strengthening its competitive capacity.

In the light of above, training is a fundamental condition so that organizations can adjust to their environment considering its changing needs, place competitive products on the market, provide services that reinforce customers loyalty, and carry out operations
more efficiently (with less costs) and effective. To the same authors, it is crucial that managers and leaders become facilitators and catalysts of their employees’ capacities and adopt management practices adapted to the environment needs. The effectiveness of training depends, first, on a set of strategic considerations, capable of placing training at the core of a human resources development strategies, and in line with the organizational development ones. However, the effectiveness of training also depends on a set of applied considerations, which are at the level of control and good management of the training process.

All the moments of crisis, like such as the current situation we are experiencing due to COVID-19 pandemic, are also opportunities for development and progress. In times of crisis, social organizations must carry out a reflection based on the assessment: How are we now? What are our limitations? Which are our potentials? How can we adapt?”. This evaluation will allow organizations to be aware of what they really need to change or add, for them to adapt to the new reality. Specifically, in training, these moments of crisis enable organizations to rethink the entire organizational structure, proposing, through training, new adaptations to the new reality.

Well-being and Happiness at work

The concepts of mental health and well-being assume an increasingly important role in the work context, and even more so in the pandemic context that we live in. As is well known, work absorbs a large part of our adult life, constituting itself as one of the main determinants of the individual's health and well-being and happiness. This happiness in the work context is beneficial, not only for workers, but also for managers and organizations.

Therefore, it becomes more and more important to understand which variables cause well-being and the desired happiness at work, and how these variables intersect, complement, and influence each other.

This study, which has been running since March 2020, will assess some issues related to self-perception of well-being at work (from satisfaction and involvement at work, to emotional exhaustion, support from colleagues and other variables), satisfaction with life, a cognitive assessment and strategies for emotional regulation, and commitment at
work, as they stand out as key factors in what is the prediction of the much sought-after happiness at work.

**Training in response to Social Organizations’ Challenges**

This training project emerged for several reasons, even in the pre-pandemic period, and during it, with its relevance being demonstrated, its purpose gaining an added significance. In the beginning, this emerged to face the financial difficulties of social organizations, the scarcity of existing resources, the reduced technical team allied to the changes in the expectations of costumers/their family members in social responses, the needs of the surrounding community, the characteristics of users seeking social responses, and the challenges arising from the legislation which is constantly changing. In fact, all these factors make pursuing the missions of social organizations as a burden or an impossible mission. If, on the one hand, there is much to do, to discover and improve on the other, there are few resources to expand the range of qualified, competent, and motivated offer in favor of humanization, personalized intervention, and sustainable management. This project aims to be an effective and multidisciplinary response, a true partner of social organizations that will provide quality, multipurpose and immediate services to face the needs of each adhering social organization at very low costs. The objective is to function as a resource center for social organizations, with or without profit, in its various areas of intervention, with the purpose of:

i. Train leaders and middle leaderships to design innovative projects, appropriate to the needs of the surrounding community, in a proactive and promising logic;

ii. Assist leaders in legal compliance of various procedures (Collective Labor Regulation Instrument/Collective Agreement, Safety, Hygiene and Health at Work, Food Safety, Cooperation Agreements, Accounting and Financial Regime, among others) according to specificities of the Institution;

iii. Collaborate in the implementation, certification and monitoring of an effective and efficient Quality Management System, involving all the interested parts;

iv. Improve the provision of services according to the needs, expectations, and potential of users, through a multidisciplinary methodology;
v. Develop satisfaction, motivation, and training strategies for employees through training actions/workshops based on the know-how, teambuilding activities and psychological support;

vi. Collaborate in the design of fundraising projects/activities in a way to improve the financial health of the institution, through positive marketing and collaborative image in the surrounding society;

vii. Broaden the range of services/activities to be provided to users and employees based on their mission and vision.

Methods
With a multidisciplinary team, composed by several professionals with significative experience in the social area, and with an academic path with specialization in their area of intervention, through different methodologies, it will be an excellence partner for social organizations, assuming with this team a commitment towards a continuous improvement, aiming the promotion of the organization's efficiency and effectiveness. Each member of the team will have an associated intervention area, and through an updated documentation repository, training actions and practical workshops, online consultancy (sessions in real time and/or via email), writing of scientific articles and thematic books, the planning of events and with a personalized follow-up, it will be possible, together, to improve the institution's management with low costs, promoting the improvement of users and employees’ quality of life, towards organizational happiness.

Considering the difficulties, we have already listed and described, it becomes clear the advantages of training to social organizations challenges in this pandemic crisis becomes clear. Investing, above all, in the training and qualification of work teams, and in the constant updating and availability of resources for the social organizations managers to continue their arduous mission of making their organizations a happier place for everyone.

Discussion
The permanent technological, economic, social, and cultural changes are characteristics of the current world, and make the attitudes, knowledge and techniques already
mastered in the work performance easily misfit, imposing a constant renewal of capacities, adaptations, and innovations 4,6.

The same authors consider that the survival and success of people and organizations does not only refer to a matter of strength or intelligence, but also of the ability to adapt, anticipate and command change. In this context, organizations in recent years have given special emphasis to training. They become learning organizations, making their permanent members students, also requiring new schoolteachers, catalysts, and facilitators of learning, and trained trainers.

Thus, in the age of knowledge, training reaches organizations through human capital. In other words, it is a way of creating and applying knowledge in organizations, and it is necessary to contemplate good strategies that consider knowledge as a fundamental element 8.

**Conclusion**

Evaluation helps to reach increasingly effective interventions, so they can achieve the goals and the desired improvement; its results are extremely important for the decision-making process regarding the role of professional training in the organization. The analysis of the reproduced results allows us to review, rethink and re-format training strategies for the future, always in the sense of improving and in the direction of the goals defined and intended by the organization 9.

**References**


“All authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.”