

# Analysis of the social impact of the public policy NODESS implemented by INAES

## Análisis del impacto social de la política pública NODESS implementado por INAES

Date received: July 19, 2024    Eustacio Díaz Rodríguez<sup>1</sup>, Blanca Verónica Moreno García<sup>2</sup>    Date of approval: September 24, 2024  
y Robert Beltrán López<sup>3</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> Doctor in School and Educational Administration, Professor at the Tecnológico Nacional de México / Instituto Tecnológico de Chetumal, Academic Body ITCHE-CA-7: Business Accounting and Governance, National Candidate Researcher in the SNI-CONAHCYT.  
Email Address: eustaci.dr@chetumal.tecnm.mx. ORCID: 0000-0003-0968-5766
- <sup>2</sup> Corresponding Author. Doctor in Human Development, Professor at Tecnológico Nacional de México / Instituto Tecnológico de Chetumal, Academic Body ITCHE-CA-7 Business Accounting and Governance.  
Email Address: blanca.mg@chetumal.tecnm.mx. ORCID: 0000-0002-3045-2580
- <sup>3</sup> Doctor in Administrative Sciences, Professor at Tecnológico Nacional de México / Instituto Tecnológico de Chetumal, Academic Body ITCHE-CA-7 Business Accounting and Governance, National Researcher Level I in the SNI-CONAHCYT.  
Email Address: robert.bl@chetumal.tecnm.mx. ORCID: 0000-0001-5667-8732

### Abstract

This research focuses on the social impact of the Nodos de Impulso a la Economía Social y Solidaria (NODESS) implemented by the National Institute of Social Economy (INAES), based on the social, environmental, or economic results directly attributable to these public policy initiatives in the community of Laguna Guerrero, Quintana Roo. The objective was to analyze the impact of these government programs on the cooperative located in the aforementioned region, considering that the importance of the studied variable directly influences the acceptance or rejection of Social and Solidarity Economy strategies. Therefore, the study is guided by Human Development, focused on the expansion of freedoms and opportunities with access to a dignified and fulfilling life. Methodologically, the research is based on an interpretive epistemology and a phenomenological paradigm, using a narrative life history design carried out in four phases with stakeholders. From the focus groups, the importance of understanding the meaning of this policy and its social scope was identified. In this sense, areas of opportunity related

to the indicators used to assess social impact were identified, allowing for a deeper understanding of the complexity of human development.

**Keywords:** Public policy, Sustainable development.

**JEL Codes:** D63 Welfare Economics, I38 Welfare and Poverty.

### Resumen

La presente investigación plantea el interés sobre el impacto social de los Nodos de Impulso a la Economía Social y Solidaria implementado por el Instituto Nacional de la Economía Social con base a los resultados sociales, ambientales o económicos directamente atribuibles a estos ejercicios de políticas públicas en la comunidad de Laguna Guerrero, Quintana Roo. El objetivo consistió en analizar el impacto de estos programas gubernamentales en la cooperativa de la entidad mencionada, considerando que la importancia de la variable estudiada afecta directamente en la aceptación-rechazo de las estrategias de la Economía Social y Solidaria, por lo que el estudio tiene como eje rector



el Desarrollo Humano enfocado en la expansión de las libertades y oportunidades con acceso a una vida digna y satisfactoria. Metodológicamente se parte de una epistemología interpretativa, con un paradigma fenomenológico a partir de un diseño narrativo de historia de vida realizado en cuatro fases con Stakeholders. De los grupos focales se deduce la importancia de entender el significado de esta política y sus alcances sociales. En este orden de ideas, se pudieron identificar áreas de oportunidad relacionadas con los indicadores que se evalúan como parte del impacto social y capturar la complejidad del desarrollo humano.

**Palabras clave:** Política pública, Desarrollo sostenible.

**Códigos JEL:** D63 Economía del bienestar, I38 Bienestar y pobreza.

## 1. Introduction

Interest in the evaluation and measurement of the impact of the Social and Solidarity Economy [SSE] has been reaffirmed year after year (Alarcón & Álvarez, 2020; Graizbord, 2023; López & Martínez, 2023). The United Nations [UN] (2020) states that these processes are essential for organizations, as they provide a solid foundation for decision-making, improve operational effectiveness, and ensure accountability. Additionally, they help increase recognition among external stakeholders, which is why SSE organizations oriented towards collective interest consider them a mandatory function of management (Stott & Scoppetta, 2020; Alarcón & Álvarez, 2020).

Interest in public policy evaluation has evolved significantly over time. As noted by Blanco and Pérez (2022), in the 20th century, evaluation initially focused on administrative efficiency and financial control, driven by Frederick Taylor's scientific management. Caballero (2024) argues that after World War II, the growth of the welfare state and new social demands led to greater attention to the effectiveness of public policies. In the 1970s and 1980s, systems like the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System [PPBS] emerged in the United States, linking planning with results evaluation. At the same time, the practice of social accounting evolved from corporate social responsibility to triple bottom line accounting (economic, social, and environmental) between 1970 and 1990 (ibid). With the New Public Management of the 1990s,

the approach broadened to include efficiency and accountability, introducing standardized reporting frameworks such as the Balanced Scorecard at the beginning of the 21st century. Evaluation then became integral and participatory, incorporating technology and big data. This process culminated in the recognition of the social and solidarity economy, highlighting the importance of evaluating policies that promote cooperation and collective well-being (Hernández & Díaz, 2024).

### 1.1 Problem Statement

After an exhaustive search for information related to the impact of public policies of the Nodos de Impulso a la Economía Social y Solidaria [NODESS], there is an observed intention to evaluate them across four programmatic intervention dimensions: inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. This is evident in reports from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography [INEGI] (2022, 2023, 2024); Estivill & Laville, 2020; Montegut et al (2024); Certainly, this represents an evaluation chain; therefore, it is essential to highlight that although the terms "impact" and "outcome" are often used interchangeably, their meanings differ (Aedo, 2005). On one hand, impact is defined as a change in social, environmental, or economic outcomes (positive or negative, expected or unexpected) that is directly attributable to an intervention, program, or investment. This means it is not only about defining indicators for resource consumption and outputs or specifying efficiency and effectiveness relationships but also measuring outcomes and their contribution to broader changes (Deubel, 2021). On the other hand, an outcome may result from an external cause, such as general economic improvement (Cañedo et al., 2022).

The experimental approach, with its use of random assignment and strict control of variables, and the quasi-experimental approach, with techniques like matching to create comparable groups, have been acclaimed for their methodological robustness in impact measurement. They can establish clear causal relationships, control bias, and provide reliable and precise results, which are fundamental for public policy evaluation and informed decision-making. These ensure interventions are based on solid and verifiable evidence (Stott & Scoppetta, 2020). However, in practice, these approaches can pose logistical, financial, procedural, ethical, and political challenges (Herrera, 2023). Other methods

may be used, albeit with the limitation of making only credible causal claims about the contribution of interventions to observed results.

Following the Human Development indicators proposed by Sen (2023) and Nussbaum (2023), it is crucial to take methodological precautions regarding causality, attribution, and error control. These are essential for providing solid evidence that the observed outcomes are attributable to a social policy itself and not to other factors. As Schütz (1972, cited in Pineda, 2024; Colmenares, 2023) affirms, the lack of interaction within a society can hinder effective program evaluation by limiting feedback, understanding of individual experiences, data collection, and alignment between program goals and beneficiaries' realities. Therefore, according to Moreno et al. (2023), fostering dialogue and interaction among program stakeholders can bring researchers closer to a comprehensive and accurate evaluation of its impact. It is worth noting that in the community of Laguna Guerrero, Quintana Roo, Mexico, where the study takes place, preliminary fieldwork observations show limited interest in providing precise feedback on the effects of social program implementation. There is uncertainty in the community regarding which results can be attributed to the NODESS program. This highlights the need to investigate, in detail, the program's social and economic impact on the community.

According to Martín (2021), the terms social impact evaluation and social impact measurement are increasingly used to show a preference for indicators that can be monetarily and quantitatively assessed. This trend accompanies the rise of social entrepreneurship, social enterprises, and the growing interest from actors in social investment and social finance (UN, 2020).

Evidence-based policies and practices may be seen as a way to depoliticize public decision-making and counteract the particularistic biases of philanthropic donations, which are often reduced to cost-benefit analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis, social return on investment, and life-cycle impact evaluation. These do not necessarily focus on human development, whose goal is to improve people's quality of life and well-being and foster their capacity to reach their full potential (Estivill & Laville, 2020; Moreno & Moreno, 2023a; Hernández & Díaz, 2024).

## Guiding Axis: Human Development

According to Sen (2023) and Nussbaum (2023), SSE public policies play a crucial role in sustainable human development by improving material living conditions and empowering individuals and their communities. From Maslow's perspective (1982, cited in Sen, 2023), these policies satisfy both basic and higher-level needs, promoting a dignified and fulfilling life. From Sen's (2023) standpoint, SSE policies are essential for providing people with the capabilities and opportunities needed to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives. Therefore, social policies grounded in his approach do not only seek to improve material well-being but also strengthen people's ability to choose and achieve their individual and collective goals, as part of the fundamental human right freedom (UN, 1948).

Based on the previous reflections, the following question arises:

## Research questions

What is the social impact of the NODESS public policy implemented by INAES?

## General Objective

To analyze the social impact of the NODESS public policy implemented by INAES.

## Specific Objectives

To analyze how the implementation of NODESS has contributed to the social and economic inclusion of beneficiaries, considering variables such as access to decent employment, participation in the local economy, and reduction of inequality.

To identify the social impact of NODESS on the development of participants' skills and competencies, including training, education, and technical formation provided through the program.

To examine how NODESS has influenced the development of local communities and social cohesion by fostering cooperative networks, mutual support, and community collaboration.



## 2. Theoretical Framework

Public policies are a set of government actions and decisions aimed at solving public problems. According to Dye (1992, cited in Valencia & Álvarez, 2008, p. 109), a public policy is defined as “everything the government chooses to do or not do.” As Cuen et al. (2023) state, public policies involve designing strategies and plans that address specific societal needs. In the context of NODESS, public policies focus on promoting the social and solidarity economy, aiming for inclusive and sustainable development (National Institute of the Social Economy [INAES], 2023).

The Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) is based on principles of equity, solidarity, and cooperation. It is an approach that prioritizes social well-being over profit and consists of organizations such as cooperatives, mutual societies, associations, and social enterprises (INAES, 2023). Estivill & Laville (2020) define SSE as an economic sector that combines economic activity with social goals. NODESS, as a public policy promoting SSE, seeks to strengthen these organizations to contribute to the economic and social development of communities (INAES, 2023).

Social well-being refers to the state in which individuals’ basic needs are met and their ability to live a dignified and fulfilling life. According to Sen (2023), human well-being should not be measured solely by income, but also by people’s capabilities to achieve their goals and lead lives they value. By supporting the social and solidarity economy, NODESS contributes to improving social well-being by promoting economic inclusion and reducing inequality.

Human development is a comprehensive concept that goes beyond economic growth. The United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] (2020) defines human development as the process of expanding people’s opportunities and capabilities, allowing them to live long, healthy, and creative lives. Sen’s (2023) human development theory emphasizes the importance of individual capabilities in achieving well-being. NODESS, by promoting the social and solidarity economy, contributes to human development by enhancing opportunities and capabilities in vulnerable communities.

The theory of social capital, popularized by

authors such as Montegut et al. (2024), highlights the importance of social networks, trust, and cooperation for economic and social development. Social capital refers to the resources available in relationships and social networks, which can facilitate collective action and community well-being. By fostering the creation and strengthening of cooperatives and social enterprises, NODESS builds social capital, promoting cohesion and community development (Sanabria & Salgado, 2023).

Governance theory focuses on how public decisions are made and implemented, involving not only the government but also private and civil society actors. Kooiman (2020) states that governance is a dynamic and flexible process that reflects the interaction and cooperation between different actors in managing public affairs, where power and authority are not solely concentrated in the State but are distributed through various networks and partnerships. NODESS represents an approach to collaborative governance, where the state, social organizations, and the community work together to achieve common goals (INAES, 2023).

## 3. Methodology

### *Approach*

Grounded in Sen’s Human Development Theory and the methods for building relevant evidence proposed by the United Nations Research Institute on Social Development [UNRISD] (2022) based on the aforementioned theory to measure the impacts of social policy in political, economic, and social dimensions the authors of this study chose a qualitative approach. According to Ríos (2024), this approach allows for the use of techniques and the design of tools that address perceptions of the social impact of public policies through concepts, beliefs, emotions, thoughts, and mental images. In line with Zúñiga et al. (2023), this epistemology makes it possible to identify, validate, and analyze aspects related to social impact, enabling a protagonist-centered understanding of experiences regarding implemented policies.

### *Relevance.*

The relevance of choosing a phenomenological approach lies in its aim to “understand the meaningful structure of the world of everyday



life" (Schütz, 1972, p. 73), giving priority to the social world with respect to the phenomenon of consciousness. Pineda (2024) asserts that this theoretical current focuses on everyday life; its main interest lies in understanding how different aspects are related, aiming to analyze intersubjectivity and the relationship between one Self and another Self, based on the observation and analysis of lived experiences.

### *Methodological steps of the research*

Considering the methodology proposed by Piza et al. (2019), the research was carried out in four phases, as follows:

1. Preparatory phase. This included the reflective stage and the design stage, during which the activities to be carried out in the following phases were planned.
2. Fieldwork. In this phase, the field was accessed, where wandering and map construction were conducted. A productive data collection process was also carried out, based on the criteria of data sufficiency and adequacy.
3. Analytical phase. This involved data reduction, organization, and transformation. Results were obtained, and conclusions were verified.
4. Informative phase. This consisted of the preparation of the final report.

### *Subjects*

**Table 1.** Stakeholders proposed for analysis.

Stakeholder Mapping for NODESS (N2323000004)				
Direct Beneficiaries	Indirect Beneficiaries	Government Institutions	Social Actors	Private Sector
Coconut Producers Cooperative	Families of Entrepreneurs	Instituto Nacional de la Economía Social (INAES)	Ejidatarios (communal landholders) of Laguna Guerrero	Local Merchants
Community of Laguna Guerrero, Q.R.	Local Consumers	Secretariat of Economic Development		

*Note.* Boosting Node for the Social and Solidarity Economy (EES), Coconut Producers and Derivatives Cooperative of Laguna Guerrero, Q. Roo SC de RL de CV. Self-made.

**Inclusion Criteria.** Individuals who belong to the Cooperative of Coco Producers and Derivatives of Laguna Guerrero, who are

direct beneficiaries of NODESS, over 18 years old. Members of communities that have been beneficiaries of NODESS programs. Individuals willing to participate voluntarily. Spanish-speaking individuals.

**Exclusion Criteria.** Individuals who do not reside in the specific areas of Quintana Roo where the NODESS policy was implemented. Individuals who reside temporarily (less than a year) in the region and do not have significant community involvement. Individuals under 18 years old. Individuals who have not interacted with NODESS programs. Individuals who have not been direct or indirect beneficiaries of NODESS policies. Individuals unwilling to participate. Individuals with physical or mental limitations that prevent their participation without adequate support. Employees of INAES directly involved in NODESS implementation, to avoid conflicts of interest. Individuals with personal or financial interests that could bias the research results. Individuals who do not speak Spanish.

### *Research Method*

**Narrative Design.** Used in order to have a deep understanding of the studied topic, based on the experience of the subjects under study.

### *Research Techniques*

**Focus Group.** Following the proposals of Espinoza et al. (2024), this technique was used to obtain detailed information regarding participants' perceptions, opinions, attitudes, and experiences related to the topic of study.

**Autobiography.** In this work, data were collected from the personal stories of the subjects and the narration of their experiences, with the aim of identifying, understanding, recording, and analyzing them. This means that the research focused on what the subjects of study said. The work had a biographical-narrative approach, which, according to Espinoza et al. (2024), has its own identity, as it not only centers on the collection and analysis of data, but is also essential for constructing knowledge in social research, given that it converges with various social areas, linking different fields such as life history, psychology, narrative anthropology, etc.

**In-depth Interview (semi-structured).** Used to

## Dimensions and categories of social impact.

**Table 2.** Categories, domains, and dimensions involved in social impact.

Category	Domain	Dimension	
Economic	Jobs Generated	Direct and indirect jobs for cooperative members	
		Before Intervention	After Intervention
	Beneficiary Income	Average monthly/annual income of cooperative members	
		Before Intervention	After Intervention
	Access to Financing	Number of beneficiaries who obtained financing from cooperative members	
		Before Intervention	After Intervention
Policy	Opportunities	Access to education, health systems, community participation for cooperative members	
		Before Intervention	After Intervention
	Capacities	Decision-making capacity, self-sufficiency, independence, creativity, proactivity, leadership, empowerment of cooperative members	
		Before Intervention	After Intervention
Social	Teamwork	Cooperation, teamwork, discipline, commitment of cooperative members	
		Before Intervention	After Intervention
Psychological	competencies and skills	Knowledge, skills, motivation, empathy of cooperative members	
		Before Intervention	After Intervention

**Note.** Self-made.

obtain holistic, personalized, and contextualized information, allowing clarification of concepts from the subjects of study (Okuda and Gómez, 2005).

### Data collection instruments

**Interviewer (observation).** López (2023) states that the researcher themselves is the real instrument of data collection in the qualitative process; therefore, they not only inquire but also serve as the means to obtain information.

**Video Recorder.** Used to record and replay information.

### Data recording

**Field Journal.** Considered a support tool for the researcher to maintain precise records (López, 2023).

**Autobiographical-Narrative Interview.** Designed by the authors of the work, with questions based on the theories cited, investigating the particular experiences of the interviewee, with the aim of having them narrate their experiences and events from their personal life.

### Research strategy

**Triangulation.** This is an important strategy to determine credibility. According to Okuda and Gómez (2005), triangulation is generally considered an appropriate approach for social research, as it allows data to be obtained from a more complete and reliable perspective on a phenomenon or topic of study.

It is important to emphasize that the results described in the previous table are consistent with the public policies promoted within the NODESS context, considering that they foster a social and solidarity-based economy aimed at inclusive and sustainable community development. This approach highlights equity, solidarity, and cooperation, prioritizing social well-being over profit and promoting people's ability to achieve their goals and lead a life they value.

By supporting the social and solidarity economy, NODESS contributes to improving social well-being by promoting economic inclusion and reducing inequality—an aspect that the

informants agree on, as they believe development should not be exclusive to a particular group. Instead, it should provide opportunities and challenges that enhance people's capabilities, pulling them out of the economic and social vulnerability in which the community had previously found itself. Through this, new forms of coexistence and interaction have emerged, fostering community cohesion.

In relation to the objectives of the ongoing research, emphasis is placed on the impact of NODESS on the social and economic inclusion

of beneficiaries by facilitating access to decent employment and encouraging active participation in the local economy. These hubs not only create job opportunities but also contribute to reducing inequality by providing technical training and skill-building opportunities that improve participants' competencies. The education and training provided through NODESS allow individuals to acquire the necessary tools to compete in the labor market and start their own projects. Additionally, by strengthening cooperative networks and promoting community collaboration, NODESS reinforces social cohesion

## 4. Results

**Table 3.** *Stakeholders' perceptions of the social impact of the NODESS*

Stakeholders	Category	Perception
<b>Direct Beneficiaries</b>	Economic	+ They understand that the goal is to promote collaboration and mutual support. They believe it can strengthen the local economy and offer greater long-term economic stability.
		- However, there is concern and reluctance due to uncertainty about the efficiency and long-term financial viability, doubting whether these policies can generate income to compete in a market dominated by large companies.
	Political	+ They are pleased to think that someone is currently concerned about them and their communities. They assume this is part of the democracy currently present in the country.
		- On the other hand, they suspect that the programs are not genuinely motivated by the governor's interest but are just a strategy to gain favor and advance in political careers. They believe that once the opportunity passes, politicians will stop pretending and abandon this and other programs, using them as excuses to continue stealing.
	Social	+ They think that if the land weren't communal (ejido), community bonds and greater cohesion would be encouraged.
		- However, many people do not trust the honesty of those involved and prefer to wait and see what happens to others before deciding to participate. They would rather avoid internal conflicts due to lack of commitment or potential unfair distribution of profits.
<b>Indirect Beneficiaries</b>	Psychological	+ For now, they feel the same, but understand that over time, they could receive training that gives them tools to improve their productivity or products. They perceive empathy from professionals/teachers/researchers who they believe are genuinely involved and also marginalized by lack of government support, assuming they could be the real solution for developing skills and knowledge.
		- They report feeling stress and anxiety about the cooperative's future, which demotivates them.
	Economic	+ Consumers haven't heard much about it but are surprised that someone is finally helping the community to make progress. They ask if they will also receive direct economic benefits, like with other social programs.
		- Relatives of cooperative members say they haven't seen profits yet but understand that all processes take time to yield results.
	Political	+ They believe a transformation is finally taking place. Regardless of the NODESS public policies, they see other policies that are already benefiting them and assume this one might work too.
		- They are skeptical about the true political will behind these initiatives, fearing they are more rhetorical than effective and genuine action.
	Social	+ They don't know what to think since there hasn't been any visible improvement in social fabric or collaboration.
		- They don't understand how this public policy promotes solidarity among people who already live just to eat. Still, they think maybe in the far future, people will learn to cooperate for the common good, work in teams, or understand the importance of joining forces but they don't know how.
	Psychological	+ They feel hopeful and motivated to see that there are many options now to move forward; they say it gives them security.
		- However, they also experience frustration and disappointment if the policies don't yield expected results. They remain skeptical and distrustful of public institutions and their ability to generate positive change



Stakeholders	Category	Perception
Government Institutions	Economic	+ They understand the concept and usefulness, infer that the Social and Solidarity Economy (ESS) has the potential to diversify the economy, foster local job creation, and promote more sustainable economic practices. Still, they believe it remains to be seen if this is true. They tend to view development through an economic lens.
		- They express concern about the long-term efficiency and viability of these policies, doubting they can compete effectively in a globalized market without constant subsidies.
	Political	+ Concepts are well-defined; they know that civic participation is encouraged and the legitimacy of the government is reinforced by showing a commitment to social justice and equity. Some say the trend must be followed, and if ESS is in fashion, it must be embraced.
		- They doubt the real ability to implement these policies effectively and fear that if something fails, it could discredit the government and reduce public trust in institutions, which they assume are trustworthy to most citizens.
	Social	+ They say NODESS promotes social cohesion, solidarity, and integration of marginalized communities, contributing to a more just and balanced society.
		- They assume that structural inequalities are difficult to adequately address and that high expectations could lead to disappointment and social conflict, even if the institution believes itself capable.
Social Actors	Psychological	+ They say it's nice to know they can offer support and generate well-being (in economic terms), which makes them feel like good, dignified people hoping to receive recognition for promoting progressive initiatives.
		- They know there will always be criticism and dissatisfied people, and that's just how it is. They distance themselves from the responsibility of not meeting people's needs, asserting they do what they are supposed to nothing more, nothing less because everyone has needs, even them.
	Economic	+ They think the policy could perhaps be viable long-term but prefer not to take risks, believing that in these types of initiatives, everyone wins or everyone loses. They doubt the ability to compete effectively with traditional and sustainable economic models without ongoing support. From experience, they say it's better to step back or not get involved when in doubt.
		- They are skeptical of the government's true intentions, suspecting these policies are more about gaining electoral support than a genuine commitment to rural development.
	Social	+ They say that if they knew this was a 100% secure and effective policy, they would support the strengthening of community ties and cooperation among ejidatarios, which could improve social cohesion and solidarity.
		- They believe it is difficult or impossible for a single policy to end inequalities and that some ejidatarios might benefit more than others, leading to divisions and resentment within the community.
Private Sector	Psychological	+ They feel empowered knowing that to carry out this program, the government has to turn to them.
		- They think it is worrying to think about the future of their families and their lands.
	Economic	+ They believe everything comes down to working hard, and those who don't get ahead simply don't want to. They know these policies help the most in need and feel somewhat resentful, as they also need support but receive none. Still, they trust that at least NODESS might bring equity, reduce inequality, and generate a more stable long-term environment.
		- However, they also feel that these policies could create unfair competition due to subsidies and government aid, possibly leading to decreased market efficiency and productivity.
	Political	+ They hope it fosters democracy and participation in economic decision-making.
		- After seeing so much news, they believe the government is over-intervening in the market, possibly limiting business freedom and their ability to operate efficiently and profitably. They hadn't thought this way before and haven't had bad experiences yet, but they feel defensive.
Private Sector	Social	+ They say that if cooperation between society and institutions can be implemented, it could lead to social justice and the reduction of inequalities, maybe even creating peaceful communities free of crime.
		- However, based on experience, policies only benefit the relatives of those who grant them, rather than small business owners.
	Psychological	+ They would like to contribute to a fair and supportive economy, primarily because it would improve their corporate image and their relationship with local communities, with whom they could build alliances.
		- However, at the moment, this new policy generates tension, anxiety, and uncertainty, as they worry it may affect their business and the market in general. They are concerned about the stability and predictability of regulations and government support.

*Note. Results from focus groups on the social impact of the NODESS public policy in relation to the economic, political, social, and psychological categories. Own elaboration.*



and the development of local communities, creating an environment of mutual support and cooperation that drives comprehensive economic and social growth.

## 5. Analysis and Discussion

The previous results reveal skepticism, doubt, and uncertainty due to a historical perception of corruption and poor resource management, which have been recurrent issues in many government administrations. As Beltrán et al. (2019) pointed out, these problems erode public trust, since stakeholders assume that resources are not used efficiently or equitably. However, due to the opportunities and access to social programs over the past few years programs derived from public policies aimed at low-income individuals a process of internalization has taken place, as described by Kelman (1965, cited in Mitchell, 2024). This internalization results from the congruence between experience and perception, vividly felt in the alignment between the support received and the values and beliefs relevant to current times. Congruence here is understood as the closeness between the “I am” and the “I should be” (Rogers, 2023, p. 79).

In this context, the role of transparency in NODESS public policy and decision-making processes must be highlighted, as it contributes to building trust among all stakeholders. As Beltrán et al. (2021) stated, when citizens do not clearly understand how decisions are made or how funds are spent, suspicion and skepticism increase.

The lived or perceived disconnect between past promises and actions has fueled distrust in the local government’s capacity and willingness to implement a social and solidarity-based economic policy. Direct and indirect beneficiaries, social actors, government institutions, and the private sector may be reluctant to participate if they do not believe the policy will be managed fairly and effectively (Blanco & Pérez, 2022). This reluctance requires a significant shift in how the economy is structured and managed, as these changes may be seen as a threat by those who benefit from the current system (Cañedo et al., 2022). Another cause of reluctance is the lack of knowledge about how these policies work and their benefits. While organizations such as INAES or the Ministry of Economic Development may be trained in concepts related to the SSE and NODESS, it is necessary to adopt a humanistic awareness approach, so that collaborators move from being

Type I—with “vague and superficial knowledge, and empirical administrative judgments” (Moreno & Moreno, 2023b, p. 11)—to truly understanding the meaning and social reach of these policies.

It is also necessary to consider that traditional economic actors, especially from the private sector, may see social and solidarity economy policies as unfair competition, especially if these policies include subsidies or support not available to all businesses (Cuen et al., 2023). The reluctance of various actors, particularly the private sector, can hinder the effective implementation of social and solidarity economy policies. This lack of cooperation and support may obstruct efforts to create a more inclusive and equitable economic environment (Graizbord, 2023).

There is a noticeable trend to measure social impact mainly in economic terms rather than through Human Development indicators. According to the UN (2020), Sen (2023), and Nussbaum (2023), this may be due to the ease of quantifying and accessing economic indicators such as GDP, income, and employment—tangible metrics that can be clearly evaluated. Indeed, economic benefits are often perceived more quickly than social ones, which are more closely tied to attitudes. As Likert (1965, cited in Santana et al., 2023) asserted, attitudes tend to form slowly. The internal mobilization of attitude begins with the cognitive component, which is strengthened through continuous experiences. Once certainty is established, behavioral changes occur.

## 6. Conclusion

To overcome distrust in government institutions and reluctance toward social and solidarity economy policies, it is crucial to enhance transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in the formulation and implementation of policies. Furthermore, it is necessary to adopt a holistic perspective that evaluates public policy impact in an integral, inclusive, and capability-centered manner. This implies going beyond traditional economic measures to consider how policies improve people’s freedom and quality of life especially for the most vulnerable.

It is important to emphasize that evaluations must be participatory, contextually relevant, and use



mixed methods to capture the complexity of Human Development.

To conclude, it is evident that by implementing public policies through well-defined programs such as the case of NODESS and evaluating them precisely through the feedback of those involved, it can be stated, in response to the research question, that these programs generate a significant social impact on the communities where they are applied. Impact is understood as the social, environmental, and economic outcomes directly attributable to these public policy initiatives.

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