Organizational networks provide us an overview of the level of organization and community concern for certain issues and areas of intervention. Chinman et al. (2005) describe the social and inter-organizational networks as a important element in the creation of social cohesion and community mobilization and in the raise of awareness about social problems. The networks among community organizations can be developed in order to improve access to resources.

In this case, networks consist of organizations and individuals interested in common problems, issues, and strategies, that meet to exchange information, common training, and technical assistance needs (Chavis, 2001; Behar & Hydaker, 2009).

Methodology

We used Social Network Analysis (SNA) to examine the inter-organizational networks of a group of agencies that provide social services for immigrants in Navarra (Spain).

We evaluated three different types of networks between 29 organizations and services for immigrants in Navarra (Spain).

The average of years of operation of the organizations participating in the study was 17.7. They had an average of 7.93 volunteers, 15.35 paid workers and 20.41 partners. One of the organizations (Red Cross) was eliminated for these descriptive statistics, as far as their figures were comparatively too large.

First, we analyzed the network of formal contacts between organizations (e.g. workshops, resources request, etc.) during the last 6 months:

The second network examined referred to the informal contact between members of the organizations that is to say, contacts that do not need the organizational structure to occur) during the last 6 months:

The last network visualized corresponds to the joint participation in community programs for immigrants:

The last visualization corresponds to the joint participation in community programs for immigrants:

Results

We calculated degree centrality of network’s actors in each case. In Table I a summary of centrality measures of the main actors of each network is provided.

These actors are the key players in the context of social intervention for immigrant populations in Navarra. The degree centrality is defined as the number of links that an actor of the network has. Based in simple degree centrality analysis some conclusions may be drawn:

- Dense, highly cohesive networks of collaboration were observed. The work of social services for immigrants in Navarra is quite decentralized.
- There seems to be a differentiation between public and private organizations (reflecting a trend to collaborate with organizations of the same domain).
- Finally, it seems that the budget of the entity is slightly (positively) associated with the degree of centrality of the network organization.

We are now providing feedback on the networks of collaboration between organizations to enhance the effectiveness of their work.

References


