Reseña del libro:

***La evaluación participativa en la acción comunitaria. Aproximaciones teórica y metodológica***

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Involving various actors in the evaluation process is a widely accepted practice in the English-speaking world, where foundations and government agencies that fund community intervention projects consider evaluation aimed at involving people to improve the quality of results. Moreover, and specifically in the field of community action, it is deemed necessary for organizations and their professionals to be competent in evaluation in order that they can evaluate the programmes they manage, thereby seeking (1) a better management of resources and (2) an improvement in the social and educational interventions proposed.

The book we present here is based on the author’s doctoral thesis research, which examines the socio-educational roles and strategies adopted by community managers in order to facilitate participatory evaluation processes in the community actions they manage. The book is divided into four chapters, the first three of which constitute the theoretical basis of the research. The aim of this section is to analyse and relate the main concepts of the research: community action, participatory evaluation and professionals who work as facilitators of participatory evaluation processes. The first chapter serves as an introduction and presents the current state of the debate on the concept of community action and its methodological principles. It also provides a brief overview of the evolution of evaluation practices in the context of education and evaluation in the field of community action. The second chapter is the central theoretical reference, and is dedicated to the analysis of participatory evaluation as a working strategy in community action. Here we present an analysis of participatory evaluation models currently being developed, a phenomenon that began at the beginning of the nineties with evaluations of international community development projects. We discuss the theoretical and conceptual origins of participatory evaluation; the professional fields and contexts where it is applied; and the theoretical principles and methodological elements involved in participatory evaluation practices. The third chapter is devoted to a theoretical analysis of the characteristics and roles of professionals who carry out participatory evaluation processes in community action, who historically hail from the fields of (1) programme evaluation and (2) international community development. The fourth and final chapter of the book provides a set of methodological guidelines and community dynamics that facilitate participatory evaluation in its successive phases of development. These dynamics and methodological guidelines have been developed in the fieldwork that led to the author’s doctoral research.

We recommend this book, as to date there have been few scientific references – in the Spanish context – that provide a theoretical and conceptual approach to evaluation aimed at the participation of people, just as there are few methodological proposals that provide guidelines for action in evaluating socio-educational projects in community action.