


GESTÃO E DESAFIOS DE UMA INCUBADORA PÚBLICA DE EMPREENDIMENTOS POPULARES E SOLIDÁRIOS: UMA EXPERIÊNCIA BRASILEIRA

MANAGEMENT AND CHALLENGES OF A PUBLIC INCUBATOR OF POPULAR AND SOLIDARITY ENTERPRISES: A BRAZILIAN EXPERIENCE

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RESUMO

Este artigo analisa o processo de gestão de uma incubadora solidária com base na literatura existente e no estudo de caso da Incubadora Pública de Empreendimentos Populares Solidários (IPEPS) de Osasco, Brasil. O movimento das incubadoras começou com a criação de incubadoras tecnológicas e foi diversificado para outros setores, gerando um aumento de incubadoras no setor social com objetivo de incubação de empreendimentos de economia solidária (EES) que têm objetivos e processos de incubação diferentes das incubadoras tecnológicas e tradicionais. Pode ser considerada uma forma alternativa aos mecanismos e modelos do capitalismo e explicar esse modelo e mecanismo organizacional alternativo é de grande interesse. Assim, este trabalho teve como objetivo estudar o modelo de gestão e os mecanismos da IPEPS de Osasco,

descrevendo e analisando sua história, estrutura organizacional e processos, propondo melhorias. A partir das entrevistas, observação e pesquisa documental e bibliográfica conduzida em 2014, levantaram-se os desafios envolvidos com a incubação de EES e outros processos de gestão realizados pela IPEPS. No entanto, também é percebido um grande compromisso de todas as partes em fazer uma autogestão sustentável e estimular o crescimento das empresas incubadas.

Palavras-chave: Incubadora, Incubadora Solidária, Economia Solidária, Políticas Públicas, Cidade de Osasco

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the process of management of a solidarity economic enterprises incubator based on existing literature and in the case study of the public incubator of Popular and Solidarity Enterprises (PIPSE) of Osasco, Brazil. The movement of incubators started with the creation of technology incubators and was diversified into other sectors, generating an increase of incubators in the social sector through solidarity economy enterprises (SEE) that have different incubation goals and processes from technological and traditional incubators. It can be considered an alternative form to capitalism mechanisms and models and to explain this alternative organizational model and mechanism is of great interest. Thus, this work aims to study Osasco PIPSE's management model and mechanisms describing and analyzing its history, organizational structure and processes and to propose improvements. From the interviews, observation and documentary and bibliographic research conducted in 2014, becomes clear the challenges involved with SEE incubation and other management processes performed by the PIPSE. However, it is also perceived a large commitment of all parts to make sustainable self-management and to stimulate incubated enterprises growth.

Keywords: Incubator, Solidarity Incubator, Solidarity Economy, Public Policy, Osasco City

JEL Classification: Z18- Public Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

The number of incubators has increased significantly in Brazil and worldwide drawing the attention of researchers to understand this alternative form to capitalism. These organizations are becoming relevant to economic development of the region in which they operate as they impact technological, social and economic spheres (Stainsack, 2003). Despite the importance of the subject and the growing interest of academics in it, there is still a strong need for empirical research to understand how these incubators work and the challenges they face (LECA *et al*, 2014).

There are studies referring to business incubators, technological incubators, solidarity enterprises incubators and public incubators. A business incubator is a place of encouragement and support for new ventures, providing the necessary resources for the sustainability of those incubated, therefore becoming a new form of organizing and influencing social and economic development. Public incubators, in turn, are a space where activities are focused on the support and structure of social economy enterprises, following the principles of collective work, self-management and equality, and to promote alternative ways of generating employment and income (Maciel *et al* 2007).

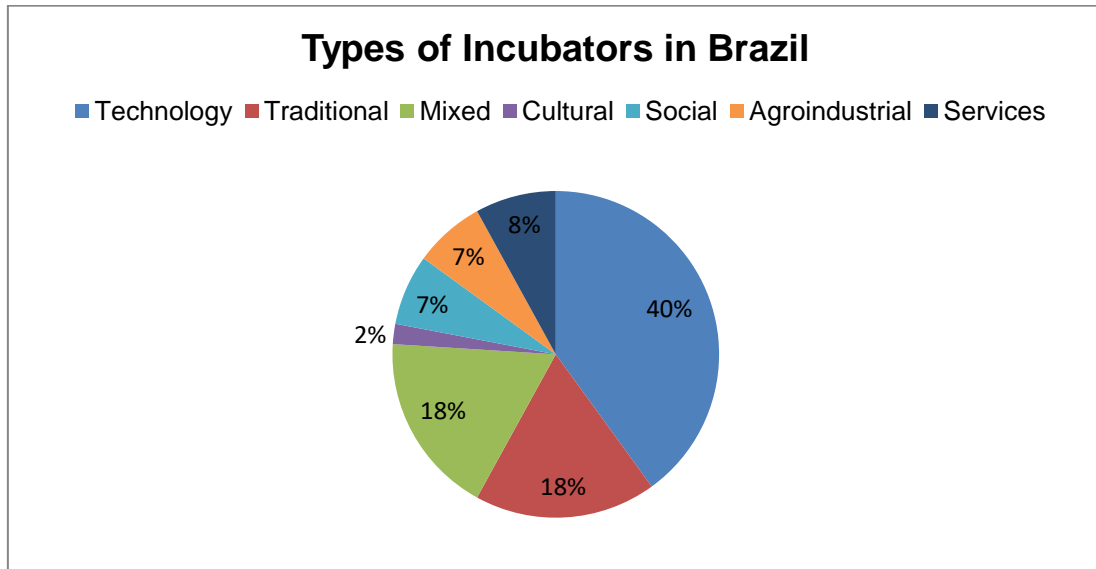
In 1988, the movement of businesses incubators in Brazil had only two institutions operating in the whole country. The 1990s marked the growth of business incubators in Brazilian territory, given that the number of installed incubators rose to 74 from 1988 and 1998 (Dias and Carvalho, 2002, p.15).

A research called "Study, Analysis and Proposals on Business Incubators in Brazil - Technical Report" of the National Association of Entities Promoting Innovative Enterprises (Anprotec, 2012) points out that in 2011 there were 384 incubators in the country. The impacts presented by the incubators were significant because they helped with the generation of work and income in addition to encouraging entrepreneurship.

The study also reported that technology incubators (40%) prevailed in the country, followed by incubators working in the traditional sector (18%) and mixed incubators (18%), which have been the three most present types in Brazil. Incubators that are active in cultural, social, agro-industrial and services sectors were 24% of total

active incubators in the country (Figure 1). Social incubators are by definition support equipment to cooperatives, associations and popular and collective forms of work.

Figure 1 – Types of Incubators in Brazil



Source: Anprotec, 2012.

This article focuses on the management of a solidarity economic enterprise incubator as it presents a case study of the Public Incubator of Popular and Solidarity Enterprises (PIPSE) of Osasco conducted in 2014. By analyzing its management process and its results this research main objective is to understand if PIPSE became a sustainable alternative to capitalist organizations from an economic, social and ecological viewpoint. PIPSE is an interesting case to be analyzed as it was created by the municipal government of Osasco and its decision making process is influenced by governmental policies, which is different, for example, from incubators that are created by universities and more analyzed by academia (LECA *et al*, 2014).

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The municipality that develops business or solidarity enterprises incubator, whether attached to an university or city council, has a new way to aggregate knowledge, technological innovation, jobs and income for the population. This research analyzes PIPSE functioning and the technique used is the case study as, according to Yin

(2010), a case study is a research technique that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and in its real-life context. By this technique this research aims to investigate about PIPSE creation and to investigate deeply inside its management and challenges. However, this research does not aim at creating a standardized management model for solidarity incubators.

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following data collection means were used: interviews, observation, literature and documentary research. Interviews were conducted with PIPSE employees, seeking knowledge about management and materials to conduct an assessment of it.

Interviews were conducted with PIPSE employees and incubated entrepreneurs in 2014 to understand how management was conducted. Through observation, it was possible to analyze how activities were carried out and how the incubator processes were performed. Eight interviews with people directly involved with the activities, routines and processes of the incubator were conducted: four technicians, one coordinator and three solidarity entrepreneurs incubated. Demographically the interview audiences were: 1) six women and two men; one person aged 30 to 39 years, two people aged 40 to 49 years; and five people aged 50 to 59 years; seven with completed higher education and one with incomplete higher education; four people worked with the incubator for a period between 1 to 5 years and four for a period of 6 to 10 years.

For literature review, data was collected in books, electronic journals, dissertations, among other publications that had relevant information about the scope of our analysis. For information retrieval, data was collected through files and documents provided by PIPSE.

The growth of the movement incubators in Brazil has brought an increasing demand for different types of incubators (Dias and Carvalho, 2012, p. 15). Thus, there was an opening process of the activities of incubators to meet the various sectors such as the social sector, the agroindustrial sector, among others. The projects to be incubated have their own characteristics with regard to their processes and their management. In this context, it is difficult to think about a standard management model that fits all incubators, as they have similarities but also strong differences. That was the idea of this case study research, that is to understand the specificities of Osasco's PIPSE.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

First incubators in Brazil have emerged in the 1980s. Aranha (2008) describes that the purpose of these organizations was to serve as a technology transfer tool from universities to the productive sector. Two incubators are considered references in the country: Technological Incubator of Popular Cooperatives of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (ITCP/COPPE), and the Centre of Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Technology (Cietec) of University of São Paulo (USP). Afterwards, incubation programs grew over the decades. According to Anprotec (2011, p. 6) there were 384 incubators in the country in 2011, that incubated about 2.640 companies. In 2013, the figure had risen to 400 incubators (Anprotec, 2013).

Aranha (2008), addressing the National Business Incubation Association (NBIA), defines the term incubator business as a catalyst for the process to start and grow emerging businesses. The influence of North American references in the study of incubators is notable and can be analysed under the scope of post colonialism in management (Rosa; Alcadipani, 2013). In addition to that, Stainsack (2003) states that business incubators are catalysts of development and consolidation of innovative enterprises in the competitive market, whether run by universities, business associations, foundations or government agencies in a context where government policies focused on promoting regional development.

Ribeiro and Andrade (2008, p. 71) affirm that a company entering into a business incubator, from the beginning, is supported and stimulated by various services and operational, strategic and business development support. The authors also indicate that incubators vary in conditions according to the development of the region they are located.

As exposed by Zouain and Silveira (2006, p. 2), the processes performed when incubation companies are dynamic "forming entrepreneurs and enterprises, fueled by investments of various kinds, backed in intellectual and technological assets of training and research centers".

According to Guerra (2008), public incubators consist of a system of training, professional qualification and monitoring in various technical areas, helping groups to

assemble, legalize and manage solidarity companies. These incubators are directly related to the city hall of their respective cities.

Solidarity enterprises incubators, which are inserted in the context of solidarity economy, according to Singer (2000), are an alternative to capitalist mode of production and distribution, being created and recreated periodically by those considered marginalized in the labor market, seeking, through cooperatives, economic empowerment and recovery of their work (Singer, 2002). According to this author, a solidarity organization that participates in the solidarity economy, clashes with the traditional venture capitalist in the sense of separation between work and ownership of the means of production. That is, for a solidarity enterprise the capital invested is under the possession of those who work there, that means that every company employee also owns the company. The growth of social economy according to Singer is due to social crises that eventually occur in capitalist countries. For the adoption of this type of economy the working masses that don't have the property of the capital must have the interest of "organizing production in a way in which the means of production belong to all using them to generate the social product" (Singer, 2002, p. 4).

However, in the view of Culti (2007, p. 3) there are positive and negative forces that added to a number of factors influence the spread of solidarity economic enterprises. Among the negative forces are the objective changes. This means that in the subtraction of the conventional way, workers find themselves in search of an alternative form of income, and the subjective changes, in which there is a rejection of the usual work solutions by citizens. The positive forces, in turn, are the ones that attract workers because of the advantages that the form of collective work can provide, either materially or ideally. Collective work is the reason that strengthens enterprises before adversities.

According to Eid et al (2003), different values guide solidarity economy: autonomy, democracy, fraternity, equality and solidarity. The formation of an entrepreneur should cover technical, political, and administrative aspects, and the mapping of knowledge of each person, individually and in the group culture, affects directly the "development of social cohesion" and the appropriation of responsibility by each participant.

The first mapping done about solidarity economy in the Brazilian context, in 2006, was prepared by the Federal Government and the Brazilian Solidarity Economy Forum and received support from research institutions, NGOs and universities. The selected sample consisted of 15.000 Solidarity Economy organizations, with the addition in 2007 of more seven thousand solidarity economy enterprises (SEE) in the database. The results of the survey were analyzed by Gaiger (2007) in order to present consistent and real information about the Brazilian solidarity enterprises.

It has been found by Gaiger (2007) that the analyzed enterprises had weaknesses related to infrastructure, lack of resources and low level of involvement of members in the everyday life of some enterprises. However, the projects analyzed had positive factors that should be taken into account, as the democracy applied, proactivity and involvement of partners in the activities and direction of the SEE. Furthermore, it was concluded that the theory of solidarity economic enterprises met the reality presented by 2006 mapping.

In the role of external agents that provide support to enterprises - for example, supportive incubators - was noted in the first mapping that what caused more impact in the SEEs were the advisors and agents who provide continuous support on the various aspects of management.

Culti (2007) also defined solidarity economy enterprises as organizations based on free association, cooperative work, self-management and democratic decision-making process. The author explains that incubators of solidarity economic enterprises arise from the growing demand of workers from all regions of the country that seek to form this type of enterprise. The same author states that in the case of entrepreneurs of solidarity economy, its originates in lower-income, unemployed and the informal market segments (Culti, 2007, p. 1).

[social incubators] Play an important role as they become spaces for exchanging experiences in self-management and self-determination in the consolidation of these projects and strategies to connect solidary enterprises of production, services, marketing, financing, consumer and other popular organizations that provide a feedback movement and growth self-supporting assembly. (Culti, 2007, p. 5)

Self-management is presented as a socio-economic relationship between men, based on the principle of distribution according to work on the capital base of the means

of production (Singer, 2002). All decisions should and must be taken by the community involved, even if there is a system of representation, because it will present effectively the will of the represented. SEEs incubators, in turn, arise from the mobilization of workers around the country who seek to form this type of project and play an important role as they become spaces for exchanging experiences and self-determination in the consolidation of these enterprises (Culti, 2007). This raises the importance of analyzing these phenomena as a contribution of southern voices in management and organization knowledge (Alcadpiani et al, 2012).

To Dörr *et al* (2013), *Social Incubators*, category where operates the Incubator of Solidarity Enterprises, are spaces aimed at the development of Solidarity Economy Enterprises through the exchange of knowledge and experience in self-management and self-determination.

For Ribeiro and Andrade (2008), incubators are becoming increasingly complete structures and require efficient management, response to demands of entrepreneurs promptly, and a qualified team committed to the objectives of the incubator.

It has been found by Calliroux et al (2001) that there are difficulties to "assess the impact of incubation programs in the development of projects and the development of local and regional economies." Moreover, these difficulties largely result from "the absence of criteria to evaluate the performance of the incubated companies and hence the Business Incubator" (Calliroux et al., 2001, p. 11). Then, in order to achieve the desired success and turn projects into successful ventures it is necessary that their incubation processes are clear and structured, and that the organization's management is efficient.

Therefore, by focusing on its management, Stainsack (2003, p. 24) explains that this "is not limited in performing support activities, but also in coordinating the institution to achieve an effective integration," both with companies that are incubated as with other partners. Moreover, the same author points out that the manager of an incubator should go beyond the operational and administrative aspects of the institution. Performing tasks aimed at the search of necessary resources for the incubated companies, promoting the integration of the companies with the incubator partners, identifying difficulties that the companies have, or may pass through and

looking for ways to assist them. Besides the above, the manager must play the role of internal and external communications of the incubator.

This literature reviews shows how SEE incubators have a definition that is widely accepted and disseminated within solidarity economy field and also between researchers of incubators as a whole.

4. OSASCO AND THE PUBLIC INCUBATOR OF POPULAR AND SOLIDARITY ENTERPRISES

In 2000, the city of Osasco, in the state of São Paulo, as well as the rest of Brazil, was recovering after a period of high levels of inflation and a political structure that was realigning after a military command period (1964-1985). According to Maciel et al (2007, p. 132), political movements in the past 20 years have contributed for the population to experience greater participation in the political life of the country. With these changes, state and local governments began to play roles in the definition and decentralization of social policies. Among the social policies considered by some municipalities was the Popular and Solidarity Economy Policy, an alternative proposal to generate jobs and income for citizens. Among the first cities in implementing such policies were Santo André, São Paulo and Guarulhos. (Maciel et al, 2007)

The inclusion of Osasco among municipalities looking to deploy such social policies occurred during the first administration of Mayor Emídio de Souza (2005 - 2008) of the Workers Party, when it was created in the city the Secretariat of Development, Labor and Inclusion (SDTI) formed by former employees of the city of São Paulo that were used to work in the Municipal Secretariat of Development, Labor and Solidarity (SDTS) during the mandate of Marta Suplicy and had experiences in this field (BITTELMAN, 2008, p. 107) .

According to Cazzuni et al (2008, p. 20), "The SDTI brought a social inclusion strategy that joined income transfer actions with job generation and income policies," seeking and presenting alternatives for citizens to achieve economic goals without necessarily following the standards created by the capitalist society - formal employment.

Osasco city PEPSI is part of a municipal social policy and was created by the Decree No. 9.823 in October, 2007 with support of the Municipal Law No. 3.798 that

created a program called "Solidarity Osasco" in order to address social exclusion (Maciel et al, 2007) and was based in independence, emancipation, development of new relations of production and social work and guided self-management" (OSASCO, 2012). It was part of the Secretariat of Development, Labor and Inclusion (SDTI) strategy to focus on enterprises willing "to adopt the principle of equitable self-management". Therefore, the program was created to "address a specific face of social exclusion" (Maciel et al, 2007, p. 135) caused by unemployment and precariousness of labour relations.

In order to have a good implementation of the program, there was a diagnosis of the popular solidarity economy in Osasco. It aimed to "map the environment in which the proposal would be specifically built" (Maciel et al, 2007, p. 142). In addition to formal initiatives, informal groups were found, with a set of projects that were in process of formation and training and did not have the support of public policies.

Before the creation of the Incubator of Popular Public Enterprises Solidarity of Osasco, there were similar initiatives in Brazil, but linked to the third sector or universities and also seeking alternatives to generate employment and income for groups (CAZZUNI et al, 2008). However, these initiatives could be temporary and have the risk of being discontinued. (Maciel et al, 2007, p. 147) Therefore, it was perceived by the city of Osasco, the need to create a specific law for this public and equipment that could encourage the organization of such models.

According to Osasco City, the incubation of solidarity enterprises is "a set of training activities and advice for people who want to create their own business, collectives, groups or family enterprises" (OSASCO CITY, 2015). In order to be incubated, the SEEs must have their headquarters in the city of Osasco and according to the decree 9.823 PIPSE should guarantee:

- I- formation and incubation;
- II- Support for the technical, technological and professional training;
- III- Support to the establishment of interchange spaces and solidarity networks of production, consumption, trade, knowledge and information;
- IV- Support for research, innovation, development and technologies transferences appropriate to the business purpose;

V- Technical assistance in the areas of financial, accounting, economic and legal management;

VI- Support for access to credit and social investment policies.

(Decree n. 9.823, Osasco, Article 2).

To Maciel et al (2007, p. 141), because the Solidarity Osasco Program was the result of systematization, planning and reflection, it made significant progress in creating a law to develop an incubation methodology for a solidarity incubator. The projects to be incubated by PIPSE were enterprises that valued quality of life and work of its employees and social justice.

More specifically Law No. 3.978, that created Osasco Solidarity Program, stated that "are considered popular and solidary enterprises those organized as cooperatives, associations, community groups to generate employment and income, companies that adopt the principle of equitable self-management, solidarity networks and other popular groups that fulfill the legal requirements necessary to formalize the legal entity "(OSASCO, 2005).

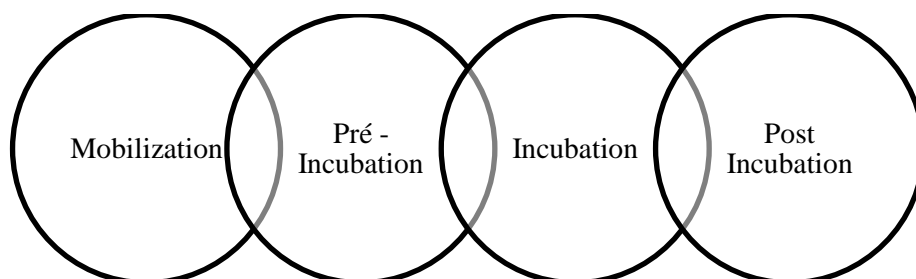
Later, in 2012, SDTI created the a book collection "Economic Solidarity Enterprise Management" to support different areas of management and knowledge for incubation technicians to carry out training, advice and encouragement to the projects.

The proposed incubation methodology followed Popular Education, as the strategy is created to carry out a continuous and ongoing process "aimed to independence, emancipation and development of new relations of production and social work, guided by the self-management" (OSASCO, 2012). The methodology (Figure 2) consists on:

1. Mobilization - This is the time where the Solidarity Incubator establishes a proactive relationship with the target audience going to this group to inform about strategies to support the popular and solidarity economy and to invite them to participate in these initiatives. The aim is to increase the ways of communication and transmission of information to the interested public. Its two activities are the publication, which presents proposals for popular solidarity economy, and initial training, where initiation and integration activities in solidarity entrepreneurship occur.

2. Diagnostic Interview - An interview to understand the needs of the enterprises or people seeking the incubator is carried out so the incubation process becomes more assertive and focused.
3. Pre-incubation - Is the phase that performs a "preliminary economic feasibility study" (CESEM, 2012) in the development the project, creating a vision of feasibility or otherwise of the venture.
4. Incubation - When the solidarity project is aided, supported and assisted in all its structuring process, based on what was produced in relation to economic viability in the previous arrangements.
5. Additional Strategies - Activities carried out by thematic workshops and punctual service to solidarity enterprises that are incubated or not. These activities are selected according to the diagnosis generated by the modalities 2 and 4.
 - a. Post-incubation - moment where the SEE or graduates receive eventual support by additional strategies. Projects are encouraged to participate in actions related to solidarity economy.
6. Encouragement and support for networking: "It's a strategic move to strengthen the Solidarity Economy in the municipality and to the economic viability and associative of the SEE" (CESEM, 2012).

Figure 2 – Incubation Methodology





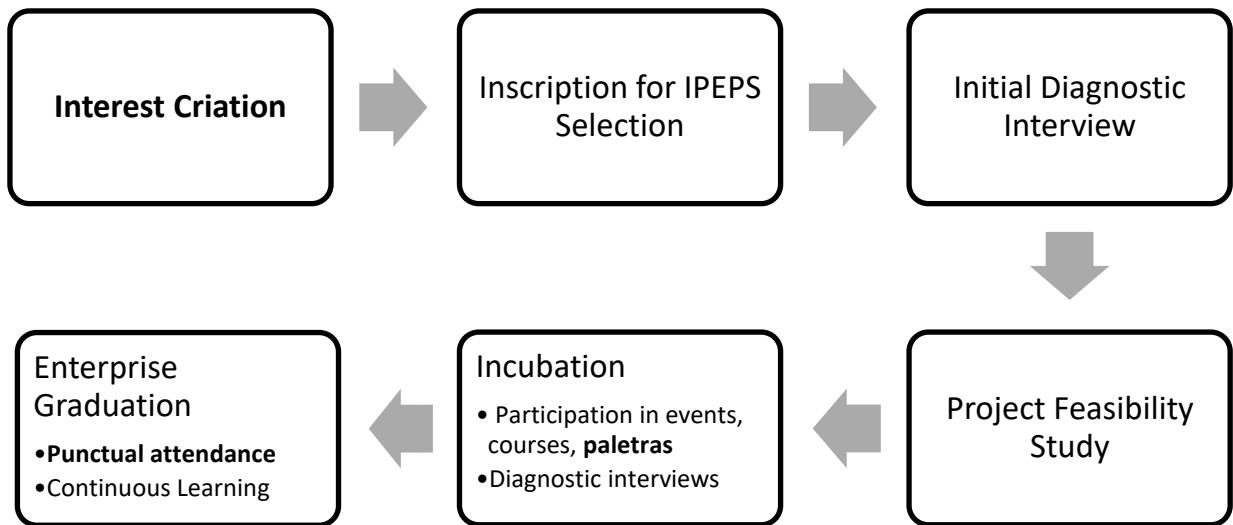
Source: CESEM, 2012

Figure 3 presents the Incubation of Solidarity Economy Enterprise flow, from the moment of creation of interest to participate in the incubation process, until graduation from the Incubator and encouragement of lifelong learning.

To carry out the activities civil servants who had interest in acting in Osasco Solidarity Program were sensitized, mobilized and trained (CAZZUNI *et al*, 2008, p. 48).

The formation of the PIPSE team was planned to be multidisciplinary, composed of technicians who work and have knowledge in several areas such as: formation of groups, legal issues, marketing, accounting among others. In interviews and during the period of observation, it was possible to understand that all the incubator workers sought to follow and share with the entrepreneurs the principles of solidarity economy. Technicians performed advisory, training and structuring of the enterprises incubated to achieve sustainable results. Through the daily activities and ongoing monitoring carried out by the technicians, it was possible to understand the needs of entrepreneurs, what had increased the performance of enterprises, actions that needed improvement and what could be done by the Incubator and its management to reach further advances in their practices, in the transferred knowledge and in the development of entrepreneurs and technicians.

Figure 3 – SEE Incubation Flow



Source: CESEM, 2012

In 2014, there were seven effective technicians in the incubator working on the different economic sectors in which the solidarity enterprises operated and which were denominated networks: urban agriculture; food; sewing; services; crafts and recycling. The shared opinion of interviewed is that PIPSE needed more experienced technicians to make the team, so that the incubator's operations reach more people and tasks are best divided.

To achieve the goals of incubated enterprises, the issues related to management of the incubator and the public center were responsibility of the Management Committee established by Decree No. 9822 which was composed of government managers and civil society members (incubated entrepreneurs and entities related to solidarity entrepreneurship). Although it was PIPSE's responsibility the management committee, it was under direct influence of Osasco city hall and SDTI, considering it's strategic relevance for the government's agenda.

Regarding the performance of the projects and the incubator, the respondents stated that there were ways to measure them, using questionnaires and assessments. However, as mentioned by one of the interviewees, these were quantitative and not qualitative analysis which are more complex due to its subjectivity and need of more variables to be dimensioned.

In interviews and during the observation period, it was possible to understand that all Incubator workers seek to follow the principles of solidarity economy: "autonomy, democracy, brotherhood, equality and solidarity" (EID et al, 2003, p 4). In addition, there was a great concern to pass on these principles to the projects.

By the end of this research in December 2014, 43 projects were incubated. During the initial period of PIPSE only groups with two or more workers were considered. However, due to high demand, individual entrepreneurs were also accepted and networks were created. In daily activities, there were spaces for group decision-making by technicians, entrepreneurs, and coordinators regarding implementation and evaluation.

Regarding network creation, interviewees confirmed the importance of networks within each segment, as these assisted in the collective movement of projects: from the moment of choice, supplier relationships, realization of trade, among others.

Seven main areas that required management and coordination and are interconnected with the incubation methodology were identified:

Table 1 – PIPSE Areas and Activities

Areas	Activities
Internal communication	Transfer of information to employees, mainly through meetings.
External communication	Marketing, communication actions and stimulus for the general population.
Recognition and enterprises attraction	Diagnostic procedures, analysis, research and attraction of the target audience.
Human resources management and partners	Management of technicians and other employees of the incubator, and relationships with PIPSE partners.

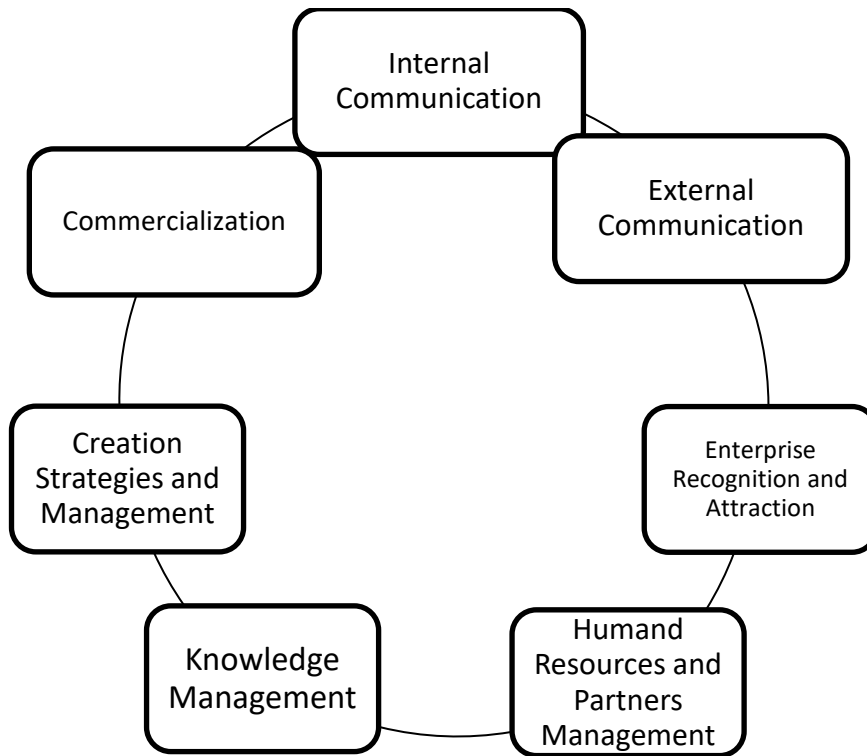
Knowledge management	Meetings, analysis, and knowledge transferal obtained by PIPSE workers.
Strategy	Short- and long-term planning
Commercialization	Processes related to the commerce of products and services developed by SEE.

Source: Authors

Regarding internal communication among the solidarity enterprises and incubator technicians there was a consensus of all respondents that spaces available for conversation created a positive relationship between the parties. This is one of the points that can be considered fundamental to the evolution of the Osasco PIPSE, as well as commitment and dedication of participants.

Formal ways of publicizing the Incubator were public notices, materials on the official website of Osasco City Hall and in local media and the Fair of Solidarity Economy. Regarding informal communication, the incubated entrepreneurs became multipliers of information, mobilized other citizens of the city, organized regional meetings or conferences that became information networks. However, as pointed out earlier, respondents believed that the PIPSE marketing could be improved and achieve greater range of people interested in learning about their activities and initiatives.

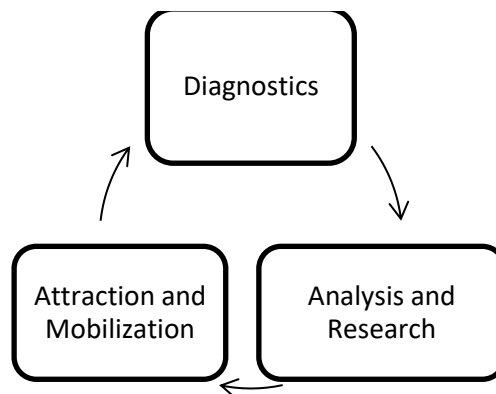
Figure 4 – PIPSE Activities



Source: Authors

The spread of information about the incubator, the incentives for target groups to mobilize and participate in the incubation process, theoretical analysis and field analysis carried out by technicians, team meetings and planning are examples of tasks that allowed incubator workers to understand the enterprises and to attract them to the incubation process.

Figure 5 –Attraction Flow



Source: Interviews tith PIPSE technicians

Because it was a place that strived for self-management, civil servants involved acted as their own bosses. Like all workers, they had to show results and complete the proposed tasks so there was progress for both the incubator and for the incubated entrepreneurs. Group decisions and meetings were the ways used to discuss the various aspects of the incubator, including the needs of their workers. In the early period of the incubator, there were several trainings for selected civil servants in order to prepare them for advice, training, and structuring of projects focused on sustainable results. In interviews conducted with the solidarity entrepreneurs, it was noted that these were factors that encourage and facilitate the growth of enterprises and entrepreneurs.

Through daily activities and monitoring, technicians were able to meet the needs of entrepreneurs and impact the performance of the projects in order to contribute to know-how improvement and to the development of entrepreneurs and technicians. The technicians were well aware of their roles as managers of knowledge and as an aid to overcome the needs of incubated organizations.

Knowledge was one of the greatest assets of PIPSE because it helped both the population as incubated entrepreneurs to learn more about solidarity enterprises and solidarity economy. With advisory services provided by technician's issues involving the creation of a supportive venture were shared. This knowledge was gathered, formalized and passed through materials developed by the incubator staff and contained a number of useful information both on the incubation process and about practices for the projects. This was a way to present the results of investment in training and development of civil servants and encouraged the search for the information of those interested in incubation solidarity enterprises.

Additionally, with the workshops, advisory services and meetings there was a transfer of technical knowledge to the incubated entrepreneurs aiming to improve qualification of participants. Such activities were internally connected with the proposed methodology and with what was specified at the time of creation of PIPSE in 2007, which stated that the activities of solidarity incubator should cover multiple training, advisory services in key areas of business and, mainly the formation and incubation of the entrepreneur.

It was common sense among respondents the importance of passing on technical knowledge and information on various subjects of interest of the enterprises and incubated entrepreneurs. Technicians were clearly aware of their roles as managers of knowledge and to support the needs of incubated. The incubator staff had the intellectual and teaching skills to provide entrepreneurs the necessary knowledge.

In terms of commercial activity, PIPSE sought to provide sales points (as fairs and a store) that allowed, in addition to sales, the creation of networking, information distribution about the incubator and entrepreneurs learning. Solidarity economy fairs, for example, were spaces used to focus on these goals. According to the interviewees, the existence of commercialization points generated monetary gains, personal and professional learning. Moreover, were places that allowed individuals to put into practice the learning received during their incubation period, to do network and encourage collective activities.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It was possible to observe, by the time of this study in 2014 that support activities, development and the incubation process proposed in Decree No. 9.823 of 2007 were implemented. Changes were made as needs and opportunities were identified, as for example, the profile of the incubated groups and projects and the acceptance of individual entrepreneurs.

Regarding the incubator management we concluded that there was a search to achieve self-management, through the implementation of a management committee, the use of group decision making and aggregation of all committed directly with PIPSE, as entrepreneurs, civil servants and representatives of the SDTI of Osasco. However, as it was associated with SDTI, there was the need for accountability and there was a hierarchy of functions which showed the limits of democracy and self management within the organization.

Management processes performed by the team of the incubator had positive outcomes perceived by key stakeholders, incubated entrepreneurs, particularly in the areas of knowledge management, human resources, marketing and attraction (i.e. relationship with incubated is one of the strengths of the incubator). However, the

processes of communication and external marketing were identified as a factor to be improved in order to expand information and events on solidarity economy in the city.

Another factor to be improved was the attraction of qualified servants to work for PIPSE. The creation of a public tender to select a specific profile of technician added to media campaigns disseminating the incubator results could attract the attention of public servants and other interested in applying for the positions offered by the incubator.

Additionally, the creation of a performance evaluation mechanism of Osasco public incubator in order to analyze how it was evolving and the results achieved, would help in its structured and efficient growth. As stated by Calliroux et al (2001, p. 11), this would facilitate the assessment of impacts on the local and regional economy. With the use of specific questionnaires in specified periods, PIPSE could have data and a history of growth and development in one database.

In addition, sales of entrepreneur's products could be boosted with the creation of partnerships between entrepreneurs and trade structures owners for creating trade centers for the products of solidarity economy enterprises. With a better sales location it would be possible to market products effectively, attract attention of consumers and boost sales.

Regarding partnerships, as seen in technological business incubators, creating links with local educational institutions would benefit PIPSE as it would contribute for the spread of practices and solidarity economy knowledge, for the aggregation of technical knowledge from students and teachers, for the use of the existing structure of the educational institutions, for fundraising, among others.

There is a large field for future research. The creation of PIPSE can be considered an important result of Osasco Solidaria policy and the seven years of activity showed interesting results. We can consider that PIPSE has been implemented, but new research should analyze how it developed and update the evaluation of this policy more effectively. In the traditional public policy cycle (THEODOLOU, 1995) where we have acknowledged the problem, the agenda definition, the formulation and adoption of the policy followed by its implementation in the last stage, the one of evaluation and analysis is definitely missing.

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