



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS AN OPPORTUNITY OF SOCIAL INCLUSION: THE CASE OF RECYCLING COOPERATIVES

Raquel Engelman Machado¹
Daniele Hilger Rafael²
Sueli Maria Cabral³
Paola Schmitt Figueiró⁴

ABSTRACT

Study objective: illustrate how the social entrepreneurship can foster the social inclusion from a recycling cooperative located in the region of Vale dos Sinos/RS.

Methodology/approach: case study with qualitative approach from the access of multiple data sources, such as: participant observation, reports of professors and scholars that are integrated part of the extension project that assists the cooperative, semi structured interviews and secondary data.

Originality/relevance: social entrepreneurship is configured as a new perspective, mainly in the field of management and social intervention, since the social problems are now viewed as opportunities and not barriers. From that point of view, several entities were created, among them, the recycling cooperatives, which have the sustainability as its focus and social, economic and environmental tripod. In face of that, the originality of this research is based on the relation between the social entrepreneurship and the social inclusion from the activities of a recycling cooperative.

Main results: it was possible to highlight the relation between the social entrepreneurship and the social inclusion, since the cooperative analyzed, seen as a social enterprise, presents characteristics that bring social, economic and environmental benefits for the cooperated individuals and for the community involved.

Contributions: from the theoretical discussion, associated to the empirical research, the main contributions are connected to a greater understanding about how the management of a recycling cooperative is performed and how this kind of social entrepreneurship may contribute for the social inclusion.

Conclusions: several factors that indicate the social inclusion were identified, such as: (re)insertion on the job market; increase of the quality of life; decrease of the social vulnerability; elevation of the level of professional qualification; and income increase. The case clearly shows the need of the cooperated individuals to act more independently in relation to the City Hall, which may be fostered by the implementation of partnerships with the formation of networks among the cooperatives, for instance. Partnerships with Universities and other education centers must also be fostered for the performance of activities that aim the development of leaderships.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship. Social Inclusion. Cooperativism. Sustainability. Recycling.

¹ PhD in Business from University of Rio Grande do Sul. Feevale University. Novo Hamburgo, RS – Brazil. ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7312-773X> E-mail: raqueleng@feevale.br

² MsC in Cultural Diversity and Social Inclusion from Feevale University. Novo Hamburgo, RS – Brasil. ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0970-6603> E-mail: danirafaelcoach@gmail.com

³ PhD in Social Sciences from University of São Paulo. Feevale University. Novo Hamburgo, RS – Brazil. ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8975-3620> E-mail: suelicabral@feevale.br

⁴ PhD in Business from University of Rio Grande do Sul. Feevale University. Novo Hamburgo, RS – Brazil. ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5160-9831> E-mail: paolafigueiro@feevale.br



O EMPREENDEDORISMO SOCIAL COMO OPORTUNIDADE DE INCLUSÃO SOCIAL: O CASO DE UMA COOPERATIVA DE RECICLAGEM

RESUMO

Objetivo do estudo: ilustrar de que maneira o empreendedorismo social pode fomentar a inclusão social a partir de uma cooperativa de reciclagem localizada na região do Vale dos Sinos/RS.

Metodologia/abordagem: estudo de caso com abordagem qualitativa a partir do acesso a múltiplas fontes de dados, tais como: observação participante, relatos de professores e acadêmicos integrantes do projeto de extensão que atende a cooperativa, entrevistas semiestruturadas e dados secundários.

Originalidade/relevância: o empreendedorismo social se configura como uma nova perspectiva, principalmente no campo da gestão e da intervenção social, pois os problemas sociais passam a serem vistos como oportunidades e não como barreiras. Nesta perspectiva foram criadas diversas entidades, dentre elas, as cooperativas de reciclagem, que têm como foco a sustentabilidade e seu tripé social, econômico e ambiental. Diante disto, a originalidade desta pesquisa recai sobre a relação entre o empreendedorismo social e a inclusão social a partir das atividades de uma cooperativa de reciclagem.

Principais resultados: foi possível evidenciar a relação entre o empreendedorismo social e a inclusão social, pois a cooperativa analisada, vista como um empreendimento social, apresenta características que trazem benefícios sociais, econômicos e ambientais para os cooperados e para a comunidade envolvida.

Contribuições: a partir da discussão teórica, associada à pesquisa empírica, as principais contribuições estão ligadas a uma maior compreensão sobre como é realizada a gestão de uma cooperativa de reciclagem e de que forma este tipo de empreendimento social pode contribuir para a inclusão social.

Conclusões: foram identificados diversos fatores que indicam a inclusão social, tais como: (re)inserção no mercado de trabalho; aumento da qualidade de vida; diminuição da vulnerabilidade social; elevação do nível de qualificação profissional; e ampliação da renda. O caso demonstra claramente a necessidade dos cooperados atuarem de forma mais autônoma em relação à Prefeitura, o que pode ser fomentado pela realização de parcerias como a formação de redes entre cooperativas, por exemplo. Parcerias com Universidades e outros centros de ensino também devem ser fomentadas para a realização de atividades que visem o desenvolvimento das lideranças.

Palavras-chave: Empreendedorismo Social. Inclusão social. Cooperativismo. Sustentabilidade. Reciclagem.

EL EMPRENDIMIENTO SOCIAL COMO OPORTUNIDAD DE INCLUSIÓN SOCIAL: EL CASO DE UN COOPERATIVA DE RECICLAJE

RESUMEN



Objetivo: ilustrar de qué manera el emprendedorismo social puede fomentar la inclusión social a partir de una cooperativa de reciclaje ubicada en la región del Valle de los Sinos/RS.

Metodología: estudio de caso con enfoque cualitativo a partir del acceso a múltiples fuentes de datos, tales como: observación participante, relatos de profesores y académicos integrantes del proyecto de extensión que atiende a la cooperativa, entrevistas semiestructuradas y datos secundarios.

Originalidad/relevancia: el emprendedorismo social se configura como una nueva perspectiva, principalmente en el campo de la gestión y de la intervención social, pues los problemas sociales pasan a ser vistos como oportunidades y no como barreras. En esta perspectiva se crearon diversas entidades, entre ellas, las cooperativas de reciclaje, que tienen como foco la sustentabilidad y su trípode social, económico y ambiental. La originalidad de esta investigación recae sobre la relación entre el emprendedorismo social y la inclusión social a partir de las actividades de una cooperativa de reciclaje.

Principales resultados: fue posible evidenciar la relación entre el emprendedorismo social y la inclusión social, pues la cooperativa analizada, vista como un emprendimiento social, presenta características que traen beneficios sociales, económicos y ambientales para los cooperados y para la comunidad involucrada.

Contribuciones: a partir de la discusión teórica, asociada a la investigación empírica, las principales contribuciones están ligadas a una mayor comprensión sobre cómo se realiza la gestión de una cooperativa de reciclaje y de qué forma este tipo de emprendimiento social puede contribuir a la inclusión social.

Conclusiones: se identificaron diversos factores que indican la inclusión social, tales como: (re) inserción en el mercado de trabajo; aumento de la calidad de vida; disminución de la vulnerabilidad social; elevación del nivel de cualificación profesional; y la ampliación de la renta. El caso demuestra claramente la necesidad de que los cooperados actúen de forma más autónoma en relación al Ayuntamiento, lo que puede ser fomentado por la realización de alianzas como la formación de redes entre cooperativas, por ejemplo. Las alianzas con Universidades y otros centros de enseñanza también deben ser fomentadas para la realización de actividades que apunte al desarrollo de los liderazgos.

Palabras-clave: Emprendimiento Social. Inclusión Social. Cooperativismo. Sostenibilidad. Reciclaje.

INTRODUCTION

Brazil has lived a period of significant absences of public policies for social inclusion. The State leaves to be desired in relation to basic services as health, education and social security, which implies the increase of the number of excluded people. The idea of belonging to a globalized world seem to have taken the feeling of belonging to a nation away from the people, to have an origin, which may promote and/or aggravate the social exclusion. As a consequence, the production of several social problems involving violence, corruption and neglect with life become part of the daily life.

In this respect, the practices of inclusion need to be expanded through the creation and execution of public policies of social inclusion, which demand mobilization of the civil society and of the government (Richter & Sturza, 2010). One of those practices is placed on the mobilization of the State and the organized civil society, together with the private economy, aiming the development of the called social entrepreneurship (Melo Neto & Froes, 2002). That



way, it is possible to say that the social entrepreneurship is configured as a new perspective, mainly in the field of the management and social intervention, since it presents a different manner to see the world, the social relations and the manners to be organized, to act and to be integrated so, with that, stablish innovations of social intervention.

The core business of this kind of enterprise is related to initiatives such as the sales of goods and services simultaneously to the search for the social impact that such activities may provide. In other words, the search for the profit is not the main focus of the organizations, though necessary for their survival (Iizuka, Varela & Larroudé, 2015). The social entrepreneurship has enjoyed a new explosion of interest in the last years in Europe and in other continents, since despite the crisis, those enterprises created thousands of jobs, making a significant contribution for the social inclusion and innovation (Then, 2014). Barki, Comini, Cunliffe, Hart and Rai (2015) reinforced the interest on the subject, pointing out that some of the great emphasis of the theme for the next years will be the measurement of the social impact of those enterprises. The theme receives special attention in the Brazilian context by the own performance of the international conference Rio+20, in 2012 (Casaqui, 2014), associated to numerous social demands of the country.

Due to the growth of social problems and needs, it is hoped that the social entrepreneurship continues to grow in both importance and practice, enabling new businesses that allow the confront of social demands (Silva, Moura & Junqueira, 2015). In this perspective, the social problems are seen as opportunities and not as barriers, seeking to find solutions in an objective manner and with great impact. This derives mainly from the capacity of those ideas to be materialized and duplicated in other locations, including as public policies (Melo Neto & Froes, 2002).

Comini, Barki and Aguiar (2012) present three different perspectives about the social businesses. Firstly, the European perspective, that comes from the tradition of the social economy (associations and cooperatives) and emphasizes the role of the organizations of the civil society with public functions. The second, the American perspective, constitutes of social businesses essentially as private organizations that apply the logic of market for the solution of social problems. The third perspective, predominant in developing countries, is based on initiatives of market oriented for the reduction of poverty and the transformation of social conditions of marginalized or excluded individuals.

Thus, from the principles of social entrepreneurship, several entities were created, among them, the recycling cooperatives, focus of this study. Their social, economic and environmental objectives involve the retention of the liquid and solid waste advance, solving diverse problems, being: for the associates, the gain of income and social-economic insertion; for the environment, the decrease of solid waste grounded or incinerated; for the industry, the return of the material as source of energy and reduction of the operational costs (Grippi, 2001; Campos, Guimarães, Vieira & Reis, 2009) benefitting the entire society.

In this context, since 2011, the Labor, Urban Cleaning and Recycling Cooperative (Coolabore) acts in the selective collection, screening and recycling of materials collected in the city of Novo Hamburgo, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. The cooperative makes part of the Municipal Program of Social Management of Solid Waste (Catavida), managed in a collaborative manner among different municipal offices, markedly the Secretariat of the Environment and Secretariat of the Social Development. The cooperative counts with Consulting in management through an extension project of Feevale University, located in the same city. There is an effort to have a greater qualification of the cooperates, aiming the improvement of the conditions of work and income. In this research, it is assumed that entering in the cooperative is a form of social inclusion. Therefore, the European perspective was adopted for social businesses (Comini, Barki & Aguiar, 2012), since they are cooperatives as units of analysis.



Considering the exhibited above, this article has as a research question: *how the social entrepreneurship, from a recycling cooperative, may foster the social inclusion?* Thus, it is comprehended the general objective of illustrating how the social entrepreneurship may foster the social inclusion from a recycling cooperative located in the region of Vale dos Sinos/RS. For this purpose, an empirical study was performed, of qualitative nature, from multiple source of data, such as participant observation, reports of professors and scholars integrating the extension project that assists the cooperative, performance of semi-structured interviews and access to secondary data related to the cooperative.

The article is organized in more five sections, besides the Introduction. Firstly, there is the Theoretical background that approaches the relation between cooperativism and social inclusion. Next, the theoretical discussion refers to the social entrepreneurship. The next chapter presents the methodological procedures used. Lastly, there is the analysis and discussion of the results, followed by the final considerations.

Social Inclusion

The concept of inclusion, according to Sasaki (2010), is recent in the specialized literature, but its roots are connected to the past. It started to be discussed in 1981 and means the modification of society as prerequisite for any person to search their development and practice citizenship. In Brazil, the speech of inclusion is expressed as a change of paradigm, in the search of acknowledgement of the plurality and the differences. But in practice, the Brazilian culture presumes that the problem is economic and not social. It is noticed, with that, the need to review the concept of Brazilian culture, since the inclusive society has already been inserted in several parts of the world, resulting from the implementation of the principles of inclusion in education, in the job market, leisure, recreation, sports, culture, religion, arts, family and so many other contexts (Sasaki, 2010).

The real inclusive Society depends on the insertion of common systems of inclusion and management. The practice of inclusion is not only about fighting poverty, unemployment, the asymmetric and illegal relations of work and promoting the economic growth (Burity, 2006), it rests on principles considered uncommon so far, such as: acceptance of the individual differences, appreciation of each person, coexistence in the human diversity, learning through the cooperation, among others (Sasaki, 2010).

In terms of social contextualization, normally people with less resources need to compensate their individual weakness, going to a collective action oriented by the class that is found in a lower level of the social scales. The collectivism is a strategy for the individuals that are incapable of reinforcing themselves due to the limited individual resources (Bauman, 2001).

Carneiro (2013) explained that the individuals of minority identity are target of discrimination. Generally, this minority is composed by people that are target of oppression due to multiple criteria such as sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, poverty, physical or psychological disability, being an immigrant, exiled or unemployed, belonging to different religions, being landless worker, among others. The existence of different individuals in a city, in a country, with their cultural differences, ethnicities and generations make the world to become more complete, where the diversity represents one of the greatest richness of the human being in the planet. However, for that to be materialized indeed, the differences must be respected.

Although the non-discrimination by race, color, gender, language, nationality, opinion or any other reason is guaranteed in the article 2nd of the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights (DUDH), approved in the United Nations General Assembly in December 10th, 1948, there are evidences that in the work world, as well as in the society, that guarantee is not effectively assured yet. In this scenario, it is worth to highlight that the most of the organizations



have highly hierarchical structures, in which the lateral communications are forbidden. The worker reports only to the superior, since this one holds the knowledge necessary for the performance of the activity. When the organization seeks to standardize the worker, not considering that the people are different, the consequence is the alienation.

In the cooperatives all the members hold the same decision power, in other words, the decisions are collective, allowing everybody to feel part of the process and managers of their business. Besides that, in the case of the recycling cooperatives, the fact that there are not criteria linked to the school level, for example, becomes those enterprises key element to promote the social inclusion of individuals that are aside from the society. Still, the fact that there is inclusion does not guarantee that the individual feels identified with the work environment and not even realizes the meaning that the activity has for them.

The identity of the individual is the result of a conquest that passes by acknowledgement of the worker in the human being (Clot, 2007). At work and in the task performance, the individual tests their capability and their competences and their control. The men work for their fulfillment. The work must become the place of realization of oneself and not exclusively financial realization (Gaulejac, 2007). In case the worker does not feel satisfied and realized with the job they are performing and can not use their capability and competence, they may become excluded from the process, even being manager of their own business.

With that, many times it is noted that, in the moment a worker becomes part of a social project, for example, they start having difficulties to understand the real meaning of work, since they were always alienated to it, not being able to participate or communicate what they think. At the social enterprise, the worker can understand the work with another perspective, according to what will be discussed in the next section.

Social Entrepreneurship

The social entrepreneurship is a recent theme in the social sciences and comes from an association between the traditional theme of entrepreneurship, developed in the areas of economy and business management and the emerging problematic of the social economy and the third sector. The called social enterprises are result of the social exclusion and the unemployment that were worsened in the end of the decade of 1970 and that, although they are organized according to business logics, they continue with social purposes and they are formalized, many times, as cooperatives and associations (Quintão, 2004).

The social enterprises seek to reach social and economic goals assuming, for that, diverse legal forms. It is possible to say that it is a way of businesses situated between the organizations that aim the maximization of the profit and those without profit motives, with different goals in relation to the enterprises with their classic shape (Yunus & Weber, 2007; Yunus, Moingeon & Lehmann-Ortega, 2010). The literature indicates different definitions for this type of business. In this article, the perspective that the core of the social business is the combination between profit and social and environmental goals is adopted (Doherty *et al.*, 2014). In other words, they are organizations that aim at solving social problems with financial sustainability and efficiency through market mechanisms (Comini, Barki & Aguiar, 2012). The elements that aggregate the different visions, perspectives or classifications present in the literature about social businesses is the concern with the poverty reduction and the practical need of positive, effective and long-term social impact (Comini, 2012).

In face of that, although, according to Mason (2012) there is no unified definition, the social entrepreneurship brings as a vital factor the innovation, since it seeks to find more suitable methods for the necessary social solutions, that have as basis performing business with social purposes aiming a profit, not necessarily being the profit, according to what it would be in a private organization (Dess, 2002).



As already indicated in the Introduction of this article, Comini, Barki and Aguiar (2012) present three perspectives about the social businesses. One of them, which was adopted in the research, has European slant and is based on the role of the organizations of the civil society with public functions (associations and cooperatives). According to Travaglini, Bandini & Mancinone (2009), in Europe it is possible to group three acting categories of the social enterprises: (i) enterprises that generate work integration; (ii) enterprises which central social goal is to produce products and services with social target or conducted by collective interests; (iii) enterprises that benefit the social and economic development through the promotion of local citizens and govern participation in the activities. The recycling cooperatives are fit in the first and third acting categories, which also justifies the perspective adopted. Besides that, they are characterized as important means to promote the social inclusion.

According to Melo and Froes (2002), the transformation of the reality is based on a series of assumptions like the reflection with the communities; the creations and development of solutions, impossible before, the social insertion in its wider sense; the existence of the full exercise of citizenship; the society focus, in terms of income generation, productivity, social and ethic justice; the establishment of new partnerships, with total integration between government, community and productive sector; the focus on the improvement of the life quality of the social actors; the reversal of the distance between economy, society and ethics; and the increment of entrepreneurial social practices and effort of the local social solidarity.

The researches of Leal, Freitas and Fontenele (2015) showed that the creation of values in those enterprises presents itself in a multidimensional form, including positive financial results, social improvements or transformation of the social reality and survival of the social enterprise. There are also other results, as the women empowerment, identified by Datta and Gailey (2012) in study performed in a cooperative in India.

Bringing the focus of this research closer, the cooperatives have basis in principles like efficiency, cooperation and viability and has as greater characteristic, but not single, agglutinate individuals excluded from the job market and the society (Gaiger, 2003). In the case of the recycling activities, the cooperates, many times, former street collectors, act as social entrepreneurs, since they hold the decision power and business management, in other words, the cooperative. Next, there are the methodological procedures adopted for the collection and data analysis.

Methodological procedures

This research sought in Yin (2010) orientation for its performance. It is about a research of qualitative nature, from a study of unique case, having as unit of analysis the Coolabore Cooperative. The preference for the use of case study must be in cases of research of contemporary events, in situations where the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated, but it is possible to make direct observations and systematic interviews (Yin, 2010).

The objectives of the case study are not the quantifications or the enumeration, but the description; the classification (development of typology); the theoretical development; and the limited test of the theory (Bonoma, 1985). It arises from the desire to understand a certain scenario or situation. In this research, the choice of unit of analysis was given due to its potentiality of contributing with the insights for the subject in question and for meeting the following criteria: being a cooperative of success nationally recognized by the practice of sustainability in its three pillars, economic, environmental and social and it is an example for other cooperatives and city halls.

In order to meet the proposed objective, the data collection involved the access to different sources, such as: access to social economic data of the collectors; documental analysis of the website of Catavida Program, history of Coolabore Cooperative, including data about the



income, expenses and revenues of the cooperative, consulted in Petry, Veron and Bonato (2015). For the report and analysis of the perceptions of the individuals involved with the program, participant observation was used, performed during eight months, including week visits to the headquarters of the cooperative and participation in meetings and assemblies. Besides that, there was the report of five professors and 10 scholars that are the project of extension of Feevale University that assists the cooperative; as well as the performance of semi-structured interviews with ten collectors and five employees connected to the Environment Secretary and to the Social Development Secretary, responsible for Catavida Program.

The data analysis was given from its triangulation, guided by the proposed goal as well as the theoretical references used. In face of that, the central elements of analysis revolved, first, around the creation and management of Coolabore and the main results of the cooperative. Next, the focus was given under the perception of the cooperates, the organizers of Catavida Program and the participants of the extension project of Feevale University about the social inclusion, social entrepreneurship and cooperatives management.

Therefore, multiple sources of evidences were used, as already described in this section, distinct and complementary, which allows convergent lines of investigation and the data triangulation, according to what was proposed by Yin (2010).

Analysis of the results

Next, the results will be presented and they are divided in two parts. First the study field is described and analyzed, in other words, Catavida Program and its relation with Coolabore Cooperative and, next, the perceptions of the different actors involved in the activities of the cooperative are presented and analyzed.

Coolabore Cooperative: description and analysis

Seeking to develop integrated actions in order to promote the sustainability, in the environmental, social and economic scope, from the collecting and destination of the solid recyclable waste of the city of Novo Hamburgo, in 2009 the Program of Social Management of Solid Waste, Catavida was initiated. Among the main actions developed, Catavida seeks to improve and organize the collectors of recyclable materials in a process of search for qualification, productive inclusion and citizen formation, through programs of capacitation.

The program aims at developing integrated actions, based on the dimensions of the sustainability: social, environmental and economic, considering all the agents involved in the process of waste management and promote the social inclusion from actions of improvement of the life quality of those actors. With specific goals, it seeks to promote the capacitation and the emancipatory social organization of the collectors as environment agents; raise awareness and inform the society about the correct destination of the waste; implement the Solidary Selective Collection; install warehouses in the city, generating work and income.

To achieve its goals, the program is based on methodological processes of social formation, technical capacitation, management and visual identity, as well as the performance of wide campaign of sensibilization and mobilization along with the community, in order to elevate the collectors to the status of a decent worker and important to the society, breaking paradigms of stigmatization of that profession.

As Richter and Sturza (2010) affirmed, one of the alternatives to deal with the social exclusion is situated in the mobilization of the State and the organized civil society, along with the private economy, aiming the development of the called social entrepreneurship, as in the case of Catavida Program. According to Melo and Froes (2002), that is configurated as a new



perspective in the field of the management and the social intervention, that faces the social problems as opportunities and allows the expansion to other places, including as public policies.

Campos *et al.* (2009) highlighted that the creation of the associations of waste collectors, while viable economic activity, was reflected in the world from discussions presented at Eco-92, when the society started to realized the recycling as a way of easing the ecologic problems and in this way, in the associations of waste collectors a solution for the lack of income to the least favored people. From that view, it is possible to consider that this initiative has showed itself well-succeeded in the city of Novo Hamburgo.

With the program consolidated and during the process of activities performance, in special the visits performed, an important actor arose in the scenario of the elaboration of Catavida Program: Work Cooperative, Civil Construction and Urban Cleaning Ltda. – Coolabore – that, since June of 2010, became responsible for the management of the Center of Waste Recycling, in the city of Novo Hamburgo.

Coolabore is located in the region of Vale dos Sinos, region constituted in its majority of descendants of German immigrants, having its economy oriented to the leather footwear industry. With the sector crisis, in the early 90s, many workers were unemployed. Since many people derive from the interior and were used to heavy services in small rural properties, with low education and without much qualification and many times, without education, ended up seeing the foundation of a cooperative as an opportunity of reinsertion in the job market.

The assembly of foundation happened in 1994, but the documents were approved by the Commercial Registry only in the next year. Besides that, some of its founding partners fought in social movements and sought alternatives of organization that included them. Coolabore was always inserted in the spaces of articulation of workers and for that matter, participates at Solidary Economy Forum of Vale dos Sinos, of the Recycling Sector of Vale dos Sinos, it is associate of the Federation of the Association of Recycling of Rio Grande do Sul and Unisol Brasil.

It is evident the characteristic of social entrepreneurs of the founders, since they created a new enterprise in the social field, showing characteristics as innovation, sense of practicality and opportunity (Dess, 2002; Elkington & Hartigan, 2008). Its journey is solid and keeps track of the advances and retreats of the social environmental matters of the city of Novo Hamburgo in the last 20 years. Considering the documents of the cooperative, initially the urban cleaning and the civil construction were established as goals. Next, it was realized that they could not compete with great constructors and they qualified for providing services of urban cleaning through temporary contracts with the City Hall of a neighbor city. Nonetheless, in the course of the duration of the contract, the information came that a Recycling plant would be built in the city. So, in the middle of 1996, the cooperative started to prepare for the development of a work that is performed nowadays, in other words, the screening and the solid waste processing for the recycling.

The entire administration of the production is performed by the associates, which divide functions of administration, production, conservation and janitorial. The management is performed especially in two organizational stages: Executive Committee and General Assembly. The Executive Committee is formed by president and staff and the meetings happen monthly for the elaboration of the administrative planning and production planning, covering the establishment of objectives, marketing, budget forecast, accounts payable and receivable, besides preparing subjects to be discussed in the General Assemblies. The General Assembly is performed weekly, during the work hours, focusing in accountability and discussion about topics previously prepared by the Administration and other topic of interest.

It also counts with assistance hired from an accountancy office specialized in Cooperativism and self-management, Tax and Accounting bookkeeping and from a company specialized in prevention and Worker health, with constant monitoring of the city hall and with



assistance of partner institutions such as Camp, Unisol Brasil, Feevale University, among others.

Currently, the cooperative counts with two units. The Solidary Selective Collection in the city, as well as the subsequent screening and recycling of the waste collected in the central region of the city is performed by Coolabore Downtown unit. The activities are developed in multimodal way, including human driving force carts, gasoline motorized carts and two trucks. At this unit only dry waste is collected, although, many times, they are mixed with organic waste, which, sometimes, may invalidate the recycling or makes it more difficult to add value to the process. The other unit is located in a neighborhood more distant from downtown and it also works as a transshipment unit, in other words, it receives all kind of waste. The place is located in a big land and counts with three mechanized belts and press for screening, pressing and waste marketing.

According to the data of 2014, 60% of the cooperates are males and 40% are female. They have, for the most part, age between 51 and 62 years representing 40%, followed by 41 and 50 years being 27%, between 30 and 40 years being 20% and between 19 and 29 years resulting in 13%. In relation to the average income resulting from the cooperative work, it is, in average, R\$ 1.350,00 (Petry, Veron and Bonato, 2015). Until 2017 those statistics did not suffer great alterations.

From the trajectory and the results of Coolabore, it can be considered a social enterprise, since it is a cooperative that integrates business initiative, but at the same time, creates solutions and dynamics to the problems of unemployment and social exclusion. At the same time, it is distant from the traditional organizations, since it appreciates the innovation and the decentralized power (Dess, 2002; Thalhuber, 1998).

The principles of social entrepreneurship adopted by the cooperative are clear, with activities that can relieve problems in different scopes: for the associates, with the income and social economic insertion; for the environment, with the decrease of solid waste grounded or incinerated; for the industry, with the return of the material as a source of energy and reduction of the operational costs (Grippi, 2001; Campos *et al.*, 2009), benefitting the entire society and the planet. Complementary to this first analysis, the next section brings the perceptions of the different involved individuals in the processes of the Cooperative.

Perceptions of the individuals involved with Coolabore Cooperative

In relation to the perception of the respondents, when questioned about what Catavida Program is, the responsible for the technical monitoring, for the social monitoring and the intern of Psychology of the Program, explained that Catavida is managed in a collaborative manner in different Municipal Offices, markedly Environment Office and Social Development Office. The responsible for the social monitoring emphasized that

Catavida Program was created because of the need of service to the demand of the community in Novo Hamburgo, in the sense of collecting the “trash” from the streets and that, performing the interventions, the Offices of Environment and Social Development, found, over the central context of the city, many workers in street situation that organized the materials on the streets and public squares of the city.

In order to know the reality of the workers, visits to the units were made, where it was possible to check the situation of labor exploitation, being possible to be considered semi-slave. Realizing that need, the responsible for the social monitoring commented that “immediately actions of confrontation were taken like the breaking of the concession of the public space for the cooperative acting”.



Besides that, the responsible for the social monitoring says that training courses were offered to the workers, scholarships, attendance (documentation, insertions in social programs, health services) and infrastructure renovation. The responsible for the technical monitoring and the environment educator of the Program complemented explaining that Catavida Program seeks to wide the participation of the collectors as well as qualify their income and work conditions in the scope of the public services of selective collection, screening and recycling of the urban solid waste, aiming at enhancing the collectors work and their social and emancipatory organization and their capacitation, valuing the work of the category of collectors, promoting the awareness and the information to the society about the correct destination of the waste.

For that matter, Burity (2006) reminded that it is necessary to understand the social inclusion as human solidarity, citizenship consciousness, need of improvement of life quality, economic investment, need of society development, tackle the attendance crisis, in relation to the terrible quality of the services provided to the population.

Questioned about the importance of the work of Coolabore Cooperative, the responsible for the technical monitoring affirmed that it is about a pilot project for the Solidary Selective Collection, in other words, a methodology of selective collection through collectors organized in cooperative. The environment educator and the responsible for the social monitoring agreed that it is about a pilot project that aims the “implementation of Selective Collection in a quarter of downtown for the collectors that searched for waste on the street and that were linked to Coolabore could have a near location to dispose the collected waste”.

The Coordinator of Coolabore Unit realized the cooperative as a strategical space, as point of collection and as space of visitations. Additionally, the responsible for the technical monitoring complemented saying that “from the structuring of a sustainable process in the place, the reproduction of the model will be realized in the city, with visits to the universalization of the Selective Collection, besides generation of income and citizenship for a public excluded of the job market”.

Silva (2011) reminded that great part of the population is found excluded of the job market and Castel (1994) highlighted that those individuals cannot have a stable position in the job world and neither the community belonging. But Bauman (2001) reinforced that people with less resources need to go a collective action and the collectivism is one strategy for the uncapable individuals to self-affirm due to limited individual resources, as the case in question shows.

Regarding the relation established between Catavida Program and Coolabore, for the respondent responsible for the technical monitoring, the Cooperative is also a partner of the Program. According to his words, it is

very important to mention that the entry of Coolabore in Novo Hamburgo was essential for the change of reality of Roselândia Unit, where the situation of the collectors was degrading, including slave work, substance dependence, prostitution and feed from the waste screened. [...] the relationship between the agents of Catavida and the representants of the Cooperative Coolabore is respectful and with dialogue, always searching for the best for both sides as well as considering devices of the National Policy of Solid Waste, which established as responsibility of the public power the incubation and the development of the cooperatives of collectors. For that matter, we checked the importance of the emergence of new cooperatives in the city, so that, beside Coolabore, constitute Catavida Program as an “umbrella” program.



In the perception of the intern of Psychology of the Program, even with that support, there is a need of greater alignment between the Cooperative and the City Hall, since it was realized that the management of the cooperative still present flaws. According to her,

[...] the organization, entrepreneurial slant, the matter of market of production logistics is nonexistent in practice and theory. So, this support of projects, they will give those subsidies. I believe that they have a great potential exactly because they can offer those subsidies and can stimulate the development of those actions inside the cooperative, aiming the result, the empowerment of those people. So, the actions that the projects develop about awareness of analysis of possibilities survey and giving a return to the cooperative with concrete actions can bring benefits and can aggregate in the own growth of the cooperative.

The observations performed in the attendances to Catavida Program by the project of Feevale University, based on the diagnosis report, pointed out the need of a great alignment of the management. Improvements are necessary in all the areas of management of the cooperative, especially production, logistics, people management and financial, since the collectors do not have formation and experience on those areas. A difficulty faced in front of those questions is that many of them are not literates and also do not control the use of computers. For Thalhuber (1998), an entrepreneurial social organization also needs to be financially self-sufficient, have emphasis on the competences, on the results accountancy and, for that, the management of Coolabore needs to be improved.

In relation to the profile of the cooperates, based on the data collected, it was verified that nearly everyone works on the activities of production of the cooperative, being the ones of higher age group work more internally unloading materials, separating and pressing, while the younger collectors dedicate to external work of collection of those materials and activities that require more physical effort.

In some moments it was realized the dispute in relation to the productivity between the age groups. There is a small group of cooperates (20%) that is in the cooperative since the partnership with Catavida Program, in 2011, and that participated of its construction, but the great majority participates of the cooperative in average for 2 years. Those old cooperates have a more accurate concept about cooperativism and associativism. It was also realized a difference between who already worked as a collector independently before the creation of the cooperative, showing greater satisfaction and more interest in participating in the internal decisions, than the ones who worked previously at private companies, showing a more individualist logic. That matter needs to be worked aiming at attenuating those problems in order to include the differences, promoting the real inclusion of all of them.

The cooperates showed great consciousness about the importance of the recycling work and its role in this process for the city, especially in relation to the urban cleaning. Many reports exemplify that:

[...] Working with recycling is a matter that leaves the utopia and goes to a practice matter. For me that is it. Knowing that that waste that you put in the trash is a master-piece, and that master-piece will generate jobs, work, income.

[...] I think that it is very important. Because if it weren't for the recycling, for the people, right? Where would all this material be put? Many say trash, but it is not trash actually. It is a material that will be used again, right? Where would the population put all this material? It is also an income. It is how we can buy the daily bread.

[...] The relation between the community and the cooperative is necessary because it is through the donation of the material that we end up receiving our income through that. Then Coolabore has to have responsibility with the clients. So, there has to be a



professional relationship of work. And a relation that the cooperative does an environmental work.

However, even though the community values the work of the Program and Coolabore, the cooperates notice some resistance, as in the case of the school located beside the cooperative, which the sewage drained in the cooperative's backyard and with whom they do not have a good relationship. In the statement of a cooperate "many don't know, like the school that says we have to leave here, but I don't know what they are teaching there, they don't come here to see how the routine is, what is created after this material".

The practice of inclusion is not only about fighting poverty, unemployment, the asymmetric and illegal relations of work and promoting the economic growth (Burity, 2006). The individuals of minority identity are target of discrimination (Carneiro, 2013) and the self-perception about the value of work, as well as the community belonging can attenuate those questions (Castel, 1994).

In general, it was observed that the cooperates have good perception about themselves, about their work and about the changes that working at Coolabore brought to their lives. Some speeches illustrate that perception:

[...] Since I was young, I participated of youth groups. I was very aware about equality, fraternity. I always worked at factory. So, the cooperative came and brought the matter of equality, inclusion of people. For me, especially this work that we do today, that involves the matter of environment, the positive factor is that it is not going to exploit your neighbor and it will also contribute with the environment.

[...] I am very happy because I like to work here. It is a job that I like to do.

[...] We need, right, and I like to work here. A lot of things changed, especially for my family. Here, we earn more.

[...] For me, reaching an age that there is no more jobs, you can't find, because of my age. And here I am working, earning my money. It caused change. A lot. Because I bought many things for my family. I am educating my children. I paid tuition for him with this job. My son already has three graduations, only English is missing, but he will graduate this month.

[...] My life changed a lot. Because when I worked at companies, I felt incapable. It was very different from here. Here I liked.

Clot (2007) explained that the own identity of the subject is the result of a conquest that goes through a recognition of the worker in the man, and Gaulejac (2007) defended that the work must become the place of self-fulfillment. In this regard, it is realized that the fulfillment with work also takes to inclusion. However, in relation to the work environment and the relationship with the co-workers, in a comprehensive way the perceptions are positive, like some cooperates commented:

[...] I get along very well! They are very important. They are nice. Because if I ask something, they are willing to do, right? We have to know how to treat to be well treated. That's what I try to do here.

[...] very well! When I am quiet, they ask me to sing. I like to sing. Everything is funny!

[...] for me they are very important, because here is almost our second home.

According to Sasaki (2010), the cooperative is based on principles considered uncommon so far, like, acceptance of individual differences, appreciation of each person, coexistence of the human diversity, learning through cooperation, aspects shown in the reports.



However, as in other social systems and organizations, there are also difficulties and conflicts, especially related to individualism, lack of union and commitment, like some reports exemplify:

[...] I try to create a respect atmosphere. Because if you want to be respected you have to respect your neighbor. I think politeness and respect are basic that I, as a person try to practice. If you receive a rock, you have to try not to throw the rock back. [...] People from the coordination usually receives criticism, they have to try to absorb and prove to them that it is not that way.

[...] It is kind of hard inside here. People get a little stressed. I think it is because of the exhaustion. There are days that even I get nervous, tired. Some want to boss around the others. But we forget. Sometimes some work more, others work less.

[...] There are some co-workers that say that they are not part, but they are part of the cooperative, if they arrive early with a cart, why can't they help inside here?

[...] There is a great lack of union here [...] a lot of people don't want to follow the time: arrive late and sometimes they want to leave early.

Even though the City Hall applies an 80-hour capacitation about cooperativism, solidary economy and recycling processes, the majority only remembers the training about recycling. It was realized, then, the need to resume that capacitation and work those matters in processes of people management.

In relation to the workers understand that their participation directly influences on the organizational results, the perceptions are diverse. The reports show that great part realizes, for example:

[...] yes, in months that it is ok, we think it was worth it! We strained! For example, this month I strained more I will earn more. It is the same with my co-workers. If I earn more, they will earn more.

[...] of course, for sure, I work in the press, if it is not pressed, it is not sold. They bring the material, but we are the responsible for turning this material into a sales product.

[...] yes, the more recyclable material we bring, the income increases and, if it decreases, our income decreases too. But we have to accept.

However, some have a different perception: “sometimes we strain more, but sometimes there is no way we are responsible, because it is the street workers that bring the things”, “I feel like an employee because when I leave here, I will just get my payment”. In the perception of the professors of the Project of Feevale University, there is still a supporting view on the part of the cooperates. The organizers of Catavida Program observed that the collectors wait for the City Hall payment that covers the operational costs, as if it is part of a salary, forgetting that the salary is a result of the sales of the recycled material. It is believed that there is a difference of perception in relation to the influence of the participation in the organization results, since some cooperates come from private companies where the majority of the organizations have traditional management and structures highly hierarchical (Gaulejac, 2007).

When questioned about the participation of the cooperates on the cooperative decisions, the following positions of the respondents were obtained. The responsible for the technical monitoring believes that “democratic management is not perfect”. The environment educator of the Program says that “according to information of the management yes, but, in many moments, it is realized that decisions are taken without the knowledge of the cooperates, according to their statements”. The intern of Psychology thinks that “they do not participate. They could and should, as a democratic cooperative, have the participation, but I don't see them involved indeed and with influence on the decision power”.



In general, the cooperates affirmed they participated on the decision process of the cooperative, in meetings and assemblies. Even though, few cooperates participate of routine administrative activities, letting that be in charge of a cooperate responsible for the management. Some claimed that a more restrict and older group have higher decision power and they prefer not to be involved in the management or have an opinion. The perception of the responsible for the social monitoring supports that perspective, commenting reports of cooperates about decisions taken without being aware and affirmed that “there are some cooperates with leadership profile, but they cannot perform the “confrontation” of the coordinator, keeping the attitude of employee”.

In relation to the workers really feeling as cooperates and owners of the same social enterprise in a collective way, few agree. The following reports illustrate such observation:

[...] I feel like an associate, as well as the others, have the same decision power [...] we are collective.

[...] they say we are all owners, but I feel like an employee [...] owner I don't think so [...] I prefer that they tell me what to do than to be owner.

[...] I feel like an employee [...] there are some you can tell they are [owners], because it is a close group, they participate [...] we feel more like employees.

The exposed above indicated that there are really two groups with distinct perceptions and participations at Coolabore. After the participation of the staff of the university in meetings and assemblies as well as in the interviews, it was realized that all of them attended those meetings, by they participate and understand the surroundings in different ways. According to what was already mentioned, there is still a supporting view on the part of the cooperates that wait for the City Hall payment to cover the operational costs. It is possible that it may be attributed to those perceptions the own difficulty that the cooperates have to understand the cooperative as a business with social purposes that aims profit, without necessarily being the profit, as a private organization would be (Dess, 2002), as well as their role as entrepreneurs and managers of that business.

Final Considerations

This article had as a general objective to illustrate in what manner the social entrepreneurship can foster the social inclusion from a recycling cooperative located in the region of Vale dos Sinos/RS. For that, a qualitative study was performed from multiple sources of data. First, Coolabore Cooperative was described, as well as Catavida Program. Next, the perception of the involved individuals about social inclusion, entrepreneurship and management was verified. Lastly, the positive points and the points to be improved in relation to the management were identified.

The relation between social entrepreneurship and social inclusion was evident on the program studied, since the enterprise presents characteristics of social entrepreneurship, bringing social, economic and environmental benefits not only for the cooperates, but also for the city and surroundings. There are many factors that indicate the social inclusion of the collectors like the formal insertion in the job market; increase of the life quality; decrease of the social vulnerability; elevation of the professional qualification level; and expansion of the income.

However, for the results to be consolidated and the Program to be amplified to other locations, some practices in relation to the management need to be improved, especially in relation to the production, logistics, management of people and financial management. Many of those actions are already in progress with the support of the scholars and the teachers of



Feevale University connected to the extension project that supports the cooperative. A point that deserved attention is the perception of the cooperates in relation to the work relation, they do not feel social entrepreneurs, in other words, owners of their own business, but employees, following a pattern of traditional hierarchy between employer and employee.

This work allowed a greater understanding about how the management of a recycling cooperative is performed and how this kind of social enterprise can contribute with the social inclusion. Regarding the managerial implications, those are related especially to the public power and to the municipal offices that manage the cooperatives in each city, when that is the profile. The case brought in this article shows clearly the needs of the cooperates to act in a more independent way in relation to the City Hall, which may be fostered by the realization of partnership with the formation of networks between the cooperatives, for example. For that matter, partnerships with Universities and other education centers must also be fostered for the realization of activities that aim the development of leaderships.

Lastly, it is possible to say that there were few limitations for the performance of the research, having in mind the easiness of access to the cooperative and to the offices. However, certain resistance was realized on the part of some cooperates to expose their opinion, as well as certain initial distrust with the presence of professors at the cooperative. As time went on, the approach happened naturally over the activities. As a suggestion of future research, there is the possibility to expand the data collection to other cases and perform a comparative analysis. A research about the meaning of work for the cooperates is also proposed.

REFERENCES

- Barki, E., Comini, G., Cunliffe, A., Hart, S., & Rai, S. (2015). Social Entrepreneurship and Social Business: retrospective and prospective research. *Revista de Administração de Empresas*, 55(4), 380-384.
- Bauman, Z. (2001). *Modernidade líquida*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar.
- Bonoma, T.V. (1985). Case Research in Marketing: opportunities, problems and process. *Journal of Marketing Research*. 22, 199-208.
- Burity, J. A. (2006). Cultura e identidade nas políticas de inclusão social. In A. Amaral Jr., & J. Burity (Orgs.). *Inclusão social, identidade e diferença: perspectivas pós-estruturalistas de análise social*. São Paulo: Annablume.
- Campos, L. M., Guimarães, R. D., Vieira, R. & Reis, D. M. (2009). A reciclagem como empreendedorismo: fonte de transformação socioeconômica e ambiental. *Revista da Micro e Pequena Empresa - Faccamp*. 3(1).
- Carneiro, N. S. (2013). Contra a “violência de inexistir”: psicologia crítica e diversidade humana. *Revista de Psicologia e Sociologia*, 25(1), 40-47.
- Casaqui, V. (2014). Concepções e significados do empreendedorismo social no Brasil e em Portugal: crise, performance e bem comum. *Observatório (OBS*) Journal*, 8(2), 67-82.
- Castel, R. (1994). Da indigência à exclusão, a desfiliação. Precariedade do trabalho e vulnerabilidade relacional. In A. Lancetti (Org.). *Saúde loucura*. 4ed. São Paulo: Hucitec.
- Clot, Y. (2007). *A função psicológica do trabalho* (2a ed.). Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes.



Comini, G. M. (2012). *Mapa de soluções inovadoras: Tendências empreendedoras na construção de negócios sociais e inclusivos*. São Paulo: Instituto Walmart e Ashoka. Recuperado em 13 de Janeiro, 2018, de <http://gife.issuelab.org/resource/mapa-de-solucoes-inovadoras-tendencias-de-empreendedores-na-construcao-de-nogocios-sociais-e-inclusivos.html>

Comini, G., Barki, E., & Aguiar, L. T. (2012). A three-pronged approach to social business: a Brazilian multi-case analysis. *RAUSP Revista de Administração*, 47(3), 385-397.

Datta, P. B., & Gailey, R. (2012). Empowering Women Through Social Entrepreneurship: Case Study of a Women's Cooperative in India. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 36(3), 569-587.

Dess, J. G. (2002). *The meaning of "social entrepreneurship"*. Draft report for the Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership. California: Stanford University.

Doherty, B., Haugh, H., & Lyon, F. (2014). Social enterprises as hybrid organizations: A review and research agenda. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 16(4), 417-436.

Elkington, J., & Hartigan, P. (2008). *The power of unreasonable people: how social entrepreneurs create markets that change the world*. Boston: Harvard Business Press.

Gaiger, L. I. (2003). Empreendimentos econômicos solidários. In A. D., Cattani (Org). *A outra economia*. Porto Alegre: Veraz.

Gaulejac, V. (2007). *Gestão como doença social: ideologia, poder gerencialista e fragmentação social*. Aparecida, SP: Ideias & Letras.

Grippi, S. (2001). *Lixo, reciclagem e sua história: guia para as prefeituras brasileiras*. Rio de Janeiro: Interciência.

Iizuka, E. S., Varela, C. A., Larroudé, E. R. A. (2015). Social Business Dilemmas in Brazil: *Rede Asta* case. *Revista de Administração de Empresas – REA*, 55(4), 385-396.

Leal, A. L., Freitas, A. A., & Fontenele, E. S. (2015). Criação de valor no empreendedorismo social: evidências a partir da comparação com o empreendedorismo comercial. *Revista de Gestão Social e Ambiental - RGSA*, 9(1), 51-65.

Mason, C. (2012). Up for Grabs: A critical discourse analysis of social entrepreneurship discourse in the United Kingdom. *Social Enterprise Journal*. 8(2), 123-140.

Melo, N. F., & Froes, C. (2002). *Empreendedorismo social: a transição para a sociedade sustentável*. Rio de Janeiro: Qualitymark.

Petry, M., Veron, H., & Bonato, E. (2015). Avaliação descritiva e comparativa de índices econômicos, financeiros e operacionais dos serviços de coleta seletiva, triagem e reciclagem de resíduos sólidos em Novo Hamburgo. Anais do II Congresso Municipal de Meio Ambiente de Caxias do Sul, RS, Brasil, 2.

Quintão, C. (2004). Empreendedorismo social e oportunidades de construção do próprio emprego. Anais do Seminário Trabalho Social e Mercado de Emprego, Faculdade de Ciências Humanas e Sociais, Porto, Portugal.



Richter, D., & Sturza, J. M. (2010). *Movimentos sociais e democracia: Uma releitura necessária para busca de políticas públicas e exercício da cidadania*. Curitiba: Multideia.

Sasaki, R. K. (2010). *Construindo uma sociedade para todos* (8a ed.). Rio de Janeiro: WVA.

Silva, J. M. C. (2011). Políticas públicas como instrumento de inclusão social. *Revista da Faculdade de Direito da UFG*, 35(1), 160-185.

Thalhuber, J. (1998). The definition of a social entrepreneur. *National Centre for Social Entrepreneurs*. 3pp. Recuperado em 27 abril, 2017, de <http://www.socialentrepreneurs.org/entredet.html>

Travaglini, C., Bandini, F., & Mancinone, K. (2009). *An Analysis of Social Enterprises Governance Models Through a Comparative Study of the Legislation of Eleven Countries*. SSRN. Recuperado em 13 jan 2018, de https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1479653

Silva, M. F., Moura, L. R., & Junqueira, L. A. (2015). As interfaces entre empreendedorismo social, negócios sociais e redes sociais no campo social. *Revista de Ciências da Administração*, 17(42), 121-130.

Then, V. (2014). Social Entrepreneurship: one response to the crisis. European Social Policy. Academic OneFile. Recuperado em 10 maio, 2016, de <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA358985404&v=2.1&u=cap&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=f8af90f521058708256f729708737779>

Yin, R. (2010). *Estudo de caso: planejamento e métodos*. Porto Alegre: Bookman.

Yunus, M., Moingeon, B., & Lehmann-Ortega, L. (2010). Building social business models: lessons from the Grammen Experience. *Long Range Planning*, 43, 308-325.

Yunus, M., & Weber, K. (2007). *Creating a World without Poverty: social business and the future of capitalism*. New York, NY: PublicAffairs.