

Productive Social Innovation In The Provinces Of Imbabura And Carchi

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Abstract

Social productive innovation in the country is a topic that has not been exploited and considered for research, this being an important indicator for measuring economic growth in a planning area. The enterprises that are classified by necessity, in the course of the years, if these continue with their activity, an evidence of innovation is noticed, if to this in the process, product or service that offers, to be able to measure this situation, a survey of information was made with the main actors of these socioeconomic sectors, through the application of the Mayoux value mapping methodology, working groups of different productive sectors and services members of the United Women's Savings and Credit Cooperative were formed, through work dynamics the levels and types of innovation that have developed within their productive activities, such as: implementation of innocuous procedures for the elaboration of food products, improvement of spaces for the provision of services, implementation of machinery for the improvement of production, among others. All these activities cause the enterprises to be classified in another socioeconomic level, identifying them as microenterprises that are in the highest percentage of agents generated by the economy in Ecuador, but not with the same benefits that the enterprises have at the moment of acquiring credits for improvement in their productive activities.

Keywords

Productive innovation, value chain, entrepreneurship, popular and solidarity economy.

1. Introduction

The definition of "innovation" from the social approach, is a term used by the industrial sector but not taken into account in the undertakings of the popular and solidarity economy, in recent years we have heard that microenterprise is the highest percentage of economic generation in our country, determining the rate of innovation in this sector leads us to the study to identify how the "enterprise" of the popular and solidarity economy has been making changes, modifications, improvements in their productive activities or services.

Social innovation is one of the phenomena that has gone from being emergent and marginal to occupying a position of relevance in political discourses and social organizations (ABREU, 2011). This is where the interest in determining how innovation develops in the sector of companies that have been socially considered "informal", but whose activity generates economic dynamism in the sectors where they are located.

The denomination of "social innovation practices" are considered in recent years quickly, in which they have seen that certain social structures are replaced by others, by different factors such as the political, economic and financial crisis of the country and the region. The social and environmental problems that characterize a more vulnerable society have highlighted the need to undertake actions that provide innovative solutions, while presenting social features (LEVESQUE, 2012).

The present work aspires to determine that innovation is carried out in all sectors that generate economic activity. To this end, a systematic review of definitions and methodologies was carried out to identify the articulating elements that structure the concept. In a second moment, it was developed the survey of productive activities and services,

through the mapping of the value chain of the members of different parishes of the CACMU Cooperative, to then analyze the information and determine the results.

2. Context

At present, one of the fundamental aspects in the management of local development in the area covered by the research is the promotion of community enterprises in which social innovation can be visualized as one of the fundamental aspects for economic and social growth.

The statement is based on the review of some researches where a difference between social innovation and technical innovation is determined, where they coincide in pointing out that the fundamental difference between social innovation and technical innovation is found in the expected result. While technical innovation is focused on achieving greater profitability and greater commercial success at the business level. (Mulgan, 2007), social innovation seeks to improve the well-being of society and achieve social change that breaks with the practices established so far (Dawson & Daniel, 2010). As Munshi (2010) points out, in technical innovations, the income derived from the competitive advantage generated by the innovation falls on the innovator, while in social innovation falls on the end user.

The selection of focus groups for the sample was identified by accessibility to CACMU members, the geographical location was determined according to the availability of CACMU agencies. In order to illustrate the sectors in which the focus groups were carried out, the following characteristics by sector are identified:

Ibarra is the capital of the province of Imbabura. It is located 115 km northwest of Quito, 125 km south of the city of Tulcan, at an altitude of 2,225 meters above sea level. It has a temperate and pleasant dry climate, and an average temperature of 18°C.

Lita, is a parish of the canton Ibarra to a distance of 119 km, of this one and to 800 meters on the level of the sea. Due to its geographical location, the climate of the parish is warm and humid.

Cahuasqui is located 45 kilometers from the city of Ibarra, approximately two hours from the tourist sites of Otavalo, Cotacachi and the volcanoes of Imbabura. The climate is temperate and mild, with temperatures between 15 and 20°C.

San Pablo del Lago is a parish in the canton of Otavalo. It is located 4 km from the city of Otavalo, is surrounded by the volcano Imbabura and totoras that is used for making handicrafts. Its general average temperature is 18 °C.

Tulcán is a subnational Ecuadorian territorial entity, of the Province of Carchi. It is located in the Northern Andes of Ecuador on the border with Colombia. Its population is 86,765. It is an eminently commercial city.

There is a close relationship between the sectors of interest of the study, they are eminently tourist because they benefit from landscapes, climate, gastronomy, soil quality for agriculture, livestock, poultry, among others. The study made it possible to identify and validate that the majority of people are engaged in agricultural activities, production and marketing of different products and services within their sectors, showing that the aspects that have allowed these ventures to be sustainable and sustainable have been social innovation, for example:

...My name is Javier, I am a person who started working since I was 13 years old I liked culture and sculpture, with the years I started my own workshop, with a little tools that are the carving iron and little wood, in doing simple things, so for the sale that we sell in San Antonio. The workshop was implemented with more tools such as painting machines, emery, drill, compressor, airbrush, tupis, drills all that is design and good art, now my carvings are more complex designs and the price improves, then my profit too, leaving me to have a life with less needs for me and the family. This personal success makes me dream of getting to export all my crafts abroad, like not thinking about Europe in the case of what is religious and being a renowned sculptor...

Testimonies with experiences like the one exposed were discovered during the study and faced with their realities, at least 45% of the participants of the focus groups started with a loan. Marital status is not a determinant for entrepreneurship with social innovation.

In spite of having been made an open call to CACMU members, the participation of women entrepreneurs was a fact that marked a behavior with a tendency to female gender of 65.5%. When referring to the family burdens we found that 62 % of the participants have between 1 and 4 children, within their life project and the search for constant innovation, said ... our children are the impetus, by them we do this and more ...

A relevant data, refers to 55% of the enterprises spent between 10 and 6 years by processes of social innovation and have been sustained until now with debt projections to enlarge spaces, technify, equip and convert their enterprises in cases of family success and consequent will be of impact for growth and local economic development.

For reference of the study the following photo gallery is exposed, the reader can identify the variety of participants in gender, ethnicity, spaces and others.



Figure 1. Integration Dynamics - Lita.



Figure 2. Visualizing change - San Pablo del Lago.

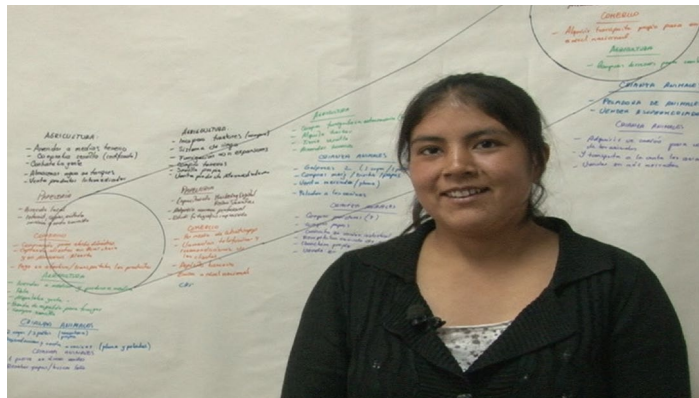


Figure 3. Jeny Cuastumal - Tulcan Agency.

3. Methodology

Through the development of the "II Study of Socio-Economic Evaluation of Gender Perceptions and Wellbeing of CACMU Members", it was identified that the CACMU Cooperative members developed different productive and service activities, in which one of the indicators caught our attention, since they claim to have invested in quality and innovation. From the social point of view, it is necessary to know what these concepts refer to, for which the Value Chain Mapping methodology is used (Mayoux, 2016).

Cooperative members are summoned to workshops held in different parishes in the province of Imbabura and Carchi, where two exercises were carried out, one to motivate and the other to survey the activities they carry out in their economic activity.

3.1. Visualizing change: sketching the path and drawing the vision of the 'sun'.

The Walkthrough is potentially a detailed and powerful strategic plan or a rigorous and rapid impact assessment tool - either as part of a process, as in this case, or as a stand-alone activity. It has also been designed as an inspired introduction to drawing for people who have never held a pencil before.

It is important to start with simplicity and help participants develop confidence in their own analysis. It is very important not to overload the first Walk that people do with too many details and too much direction. People should feel this Walk as their own. Especially when time is limited, it is preferable to make sure that people have fun, have immediate action steps, and then indicate what they can do with homework, including learning and peer support. This is particularly the case when participants cannot read and write and/or have little drawing experience. The degree of detail will depend a great deal on:

- Whether this tour is used as a single Tool, and what other tools are being used.
- Whether this is the first time that participants are learning it, or whether they have done previous Tours.
- Time available
- Number of participants per facilitator.

Only in Stage 5 should the organization try to be more rigorous and develop the journey as the potentially powerful impact assessment tool that it can be.

But trying during this initial process to establish some kind of common indicators among the participants, without being too direct. It is good to have a draft of potential indicators that can be validated, aggregated and prioritized by this process.

Also start to develop a common symbolic language, but from the suggestions of the participants and taking into consideration everyone's ideas. The facilitator should never lead this. Simply ask questions if you think particular symbols are unclear and encourage people to experiment. Experience shows that by the end of this session a fairly common language will have evolved without much outside help. Symbols can then be standardized throughout the group or program once the system has been established.

The following are the basic facilitation steps in case this is the first time that people take a Walkthrough.

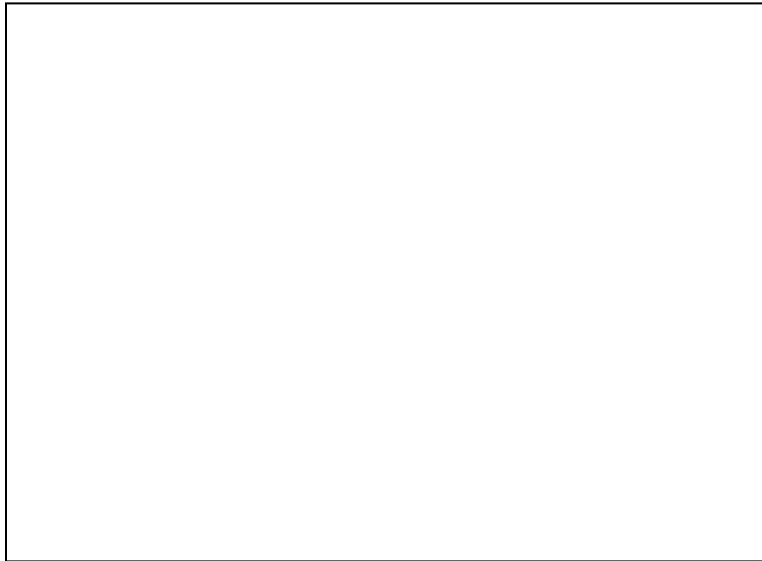


Figure 4. Value Chain Mapping.

STEP 1 First circle - future

Participants are asked to draw a large circle in the upper right corner of the flipchart. Explain that this represents the future. It is a large circle at the top because it is like a sun and we reach for the sky.

STEP 2 Second circle - present

They are then asked to draw a second large circle at the bottom left of the flipchart. Explain that it represents the current situation.

STEP 3 Lines for the Tour

Then, they are asked to draw two straight lines to join both sides of the circle. This represents your path from the present to the future. It is straight and ascending, because that is how they hope to reach their vision. Things may not go that way (as will be discovered in the follow-up to the Journey of Achievement), but that is how we hope it will be. So, we draw it that way to begin with. If the path is not straight (as in previous Walks) this leaves less room for other information and makes the analysis much less clear.

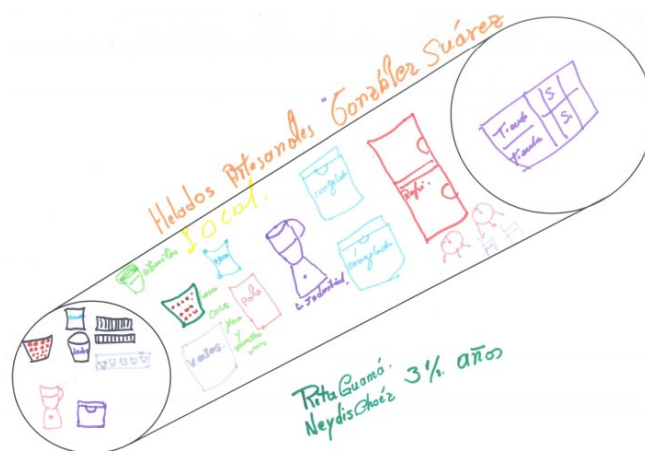


Figure 5. Work carried out by a CACMU member, González Suarez parish.

For the development of the activity, a practical example is carried out, indicating how the workshop should be carried out, focusing on what the transformations have been and what one wishes to carry out in the future, for which each participant must carry out each one in a personal way.

At the end, they are asked to present each one of them and the entire explanation is noted on a summary sheet of paper where all the expressions of the participants are placed. With this the analysis of the group is made and the information collected is placed in the Atlas.ti software, where it summarizes the key words and the identification of the concepts and their application in the development of the productive activities and services of the participants.

4. Results

The section of the statistical study presents the results of the indicator of whether microenterprises made or experienced improvements in business activity, obtaining the following information:

Table 1. Percentage of microentrepreneurs who made or experienced improvements in business activity.

	Women	Men
Increased sales	33,8	40,0
Added new products	37,1	33,4
Hired more employees	4,2	6,1
Improved product quality	49,8	56,8
Reduced costs by purchasing larger volume	44,1	46,2
Obtained cheaper financing	29,6	26,8
Created a new company/business/workshop	6,1	5,7
Sold in new markets	19,7	27,3
Purchased machinery or tools	12,2	19,8
Invested in premises/warehouse	25,4	27,7
Invested in advertising	3,8	8,8
Invested in technology or computer equipment	6,6	10,1
N	213	227

In relation to the results of table 1, we can observe that at the time of the survey the partners do not have a negative response to this indicator, improving the product is one of the questions that has the highest percentage of compliance,

followed by investment in the local or warehouse, acquisition of machinery and tools, being this fundamental part in the innovation of the process and it can be appreciated that investing in technology or computer equipment have also done so.

In relation to the qualitative section, the analysis of the personal value maps and summary of all, as well as the transcription of the videos made at the time of the workshops, is obtained as a result;



Figure 6. Cloud of words SOCIAL INNOVATION.

It is interesting to note that the initiatives recognize social innovation as an aspect that allows the development of initiatives framed within a community process that seeks to generate strategies and alternatives to the problems that arise in their area of action. Among the determinants of why they are considered innovative, it stands out that the population with which they work, especially young people, children and the disabled, allow the integration of the family into the initiatives since it becomes a scenario in which it is shared and it is possible to reflect on the solutions that can be proposed. It is innovative because it contacts the immediate contexts of the beneficiaries, such as the community, the family, the school, among others.

5. Conclusions

Social innovation becomes a possibility that organizations have, to project themselves in the possible solution to problems that arise in their immediate environment, with this study is identified that elements that are effectively found in the initiatives analyzed, ideas and proposals arise from the same community, in many of them are small-scale solutions that seek to prototype to replicate in other environments in similar conditions.

Due to their size, it is not so easy to access and articulate the work with public policies, since they dedicate themselves to everyday life and to seeking to participate with their immediate communities. Another difficulty that arises is framed within sustainability, since they are interesting ideas that seek better living conditions, but that face problems to generate liquidity over time.

It is important to carry out the strengthening process in the light of organizational elements, that is, in budget management, in the formulation and presentation of projects, in the development of fundraising, in the rapprochement, appropriation and design of alliances with other organizations and key actors that allow to give solidity to the processes.

For this reason, it is important to continue supporting the generation of networks with diverse actors that allow them to become much more visible at the local and national levels.

Thanks to the fact that some of the leaders of the initiatives take their participation as a life project, continuity can be generated, but this can at some point become a risk since it is necessary to work on the empowerment of the communities, since if the leader of the process is exhausted or feels that he cannot continue, the initiatives may disappear.

The country is not prepared for the collection of data that evidences or explains the phenomenon of social innovation, for this reason when making models in this sense, there are gaps in the validation criteria, both in the individual significance and in the model as a whole.

The dynamics of social innovation is different in each territory, that is, there is no uniformity in the criteria, which causes very different results between cities. This can be a starting point to guide the public policy of social innovation that leads to a national identity.

It is evident the pertinence of creating a social innovation survey by the public sector, which gathers the information of all the social organizations that are working in the country, from this could derive a transversal model to any organization and / or initiatives.

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Biography

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