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## THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN DEVELOPING A SOLIDARITY ECONOMY SUSTAINABLE MODEL

### **Luiz Roberto Alves**

Centro de Sustentabilidade da Universidade Metodista de São Paulo  
Rua Alfeu Tavares, 149, Rudge Ramos, São Bernardo do Campo, SP 09641-000  
E-mail: luiz.alves@metodista.br

### **Marco Aurélio Bernardes**

Centro de Sustentabilidade da Universidade Metodista de São Paulo  
Rua Alfeu Tavares, 149, Rudge Ramos, São Bernardo do Campo, SP 09641-000  
E-mail: marco.bernardes@metodista.br

### **Waverli Maia Matarazzo-Neuberger**

Centro de Sustentabilidade da Universidade Metodista de São Paulo  
Rua Alfeu Tavares, 149, Rudge Ramos, São Bernardo do Campo, SP 09641-000  
E-mail: waverli.neuberger@metodista.br

### **Abstract**

This paper describes how an education for sustainability initiative can be linked with the development of a regional solidarity network and how it can bring values able to assure a solidarity path. It discusses the role of universities in bringing new solutions and creating the future. Brazilian universities are commonly located in big cities of metropolitan areas, in an ever-increasing urban world. Methodist University of Sao Paulo, a confessional institution with three campuses located in Sao Bernardo do Campo, São Paulo and 1,600 employees, 25,000 undergraduate students and postgraduate students, adopted in 2008 sustainability as a transversal axis. In 2009, the Sustainable Methodist Program started embedding sustainability transversally in all university undergraduate programs and administrative and structural issues. The program inspired the development of Projects and Actions Research and Extension as reported here, the Montanhão regional solidarity economy network. A diagnosis of the Montanhão community was conducted to reveal cultural aspects, enterprises profile of the network and their results. Community meetings named Listener University were established in order to promote deep discussions about solidarity economy and sustainability, and change relationship and practices. 12 teachers, 20 students in action and 11 enterprises of the Solidarity Economy Network of the Montanhão area were involved. This resulted in concrete actions of the University on a peripheral area, strengthening the social consciousness and regional identity, but also identified gaps related to how the growing of the enterprises led them to the mainstream economy, losing solidarity values and ethos. We finishing discussion how to bring collaboration values and indicators to solidarity networks and the recent launched Sustainability Center can help this process.

**Key words:** *Solidarity Economy, Regional and Peripheral Urban Areas, Education for Sustainability.*

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## THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN DEVELOPING A SOLIDARITY ECONOMY SUSTAINABLE MODEL

**Education, as all great philosophers from Plato to Rousseau, to John Dewey to Alfred North Whitehead knew, had to do with the timeless question of how we are to live.**

**David Orr (2005: 11)**

### 1. Introduction

In 2010, the human race changed from being predominantly rural to predominantly urban. We can now legitimately claim to be an industrial, human centric, urban species. This industrialization shapes our economies, our societies and our cultures, and its lexicon of improvement and effectiveness determines how we collectively think and act. More than 3,3 billion people now live in urban environments; by 2030 this is estimate to increase to 5 billion of a global population predicted to peak at around 9 billion mid-century (UN Population predictions 2010). The dominant narrative of the modern urban world, which forms many of in the cities we inhabit globally, has emerged from the industrial era, and this narrative is promoted and maintained through an overwhelmingly industrial model of schooling. However, its utilitarianism is showing signs of fatigue: simultaneously with the rise in population, we are witnessing an unprecedented collapse in our global ecosystem and increasing dysfunction on our systems of education, health, politics, finance and agriculture. The establish linear capitalist model seems no longer sufficient to provide for a changing reality, which suggests that the way we relate to our world is outdated, destructive and unsustainable, and our solutions predictable, short-term and pathologically selfish (Clarke, 2012: 1).

What happens next? This largely depends upon how, and whether, we can we learn to live more sustainably in our built landscapes and communities around the planet, turning our collective genius for science, technology and the arts towards establishing new foundations for a sustainable society. This is ultimately an educational challenge; a challenge of how to respond to a crisis through schooling in its broadest sense and with practical sustainable solutions (Clarke, 2012: 1). As Sterling (2001: 12) states, it is a change of mind on which change towards sustainability depends. It is the difference of thinking that stands between a sustainable or chaotic future. The qualities, depth and extent of learning that takes place globally in the next ten to twenty years will determine which path is taken: either moving towards or further away from ecological sustainability.

Colleges and universities are critical loci for the change sustainability requires. They are learning centers for new ideas and for change. They guide other sectors and have the potential to serve as societal models. Although they are unique in many ways, their innovations are largely replicable by other institutions. And their mission and responsibilities for defining educational scope give them a reason to update and reevaluate in a way that invites institutional learning and openness to sustainable thinking (Edelstein 2004: 271). Universities

also transcend boundaries in space and time. With their senior professors and junior students, they also connect society's elders with its youth. With their interdisciplinary studies and many learned associations, they connect across intellectual and geographic boundaries and are thus participants across space (M'Gonigle and Starke 2006: 13).

Sustainability provides an university an opportunity to confront its core values, practices, entrenched pedagogies, the way it uses resources and its relationship with the broader community (Wals and Jickling 2002: 230). Sustainability is both a practical and moral subject. It is interdisciplinary: as much a matter of concern to the humanities as to the sciences. It is, at once, an inescapable dilemma of our time, a matter of study and reflection and a challenge to action. It raises questions about globalization and personal responsibility (Cullingford 2004: 250). It also raises questions about human systems of community, relationship to each other and to place, to ideas and to actions, and these are issues that are slow to change. We need to learn how to live together within this period of uncertainty, how to draw upon our qualities of resourcefulness and resilience to chart new ways of understanding, new ways of engaging with, and foster new ways of living in our world, as it exists now, which will serve us as starting points in the journey to what might become a more sustainable future (Clarke, 2012: 3)

The objective of this paper is to present how the Methodist University Sustainable Program (MUSP), the first known program in Brazil to involve an entire university with the goal to introduce sustainability transversally in all undergraduate courses curricula and in university operations, influenced an academic solidarity economy project and how those results can help to develop a solidarity economy sustainable model.

## 2. Solidarity Economy

For such a long time, capitalism is the dominant system that we actually believe it is normal or natural. This means that market economy must be competitive in all means: every product must be sold in hundreds of places; every job must be disputed by a great number of pretenders... (Singer, 2010). Capitalism can offer a choice possibility for consumers, but it causes deep social effects: winners accumulate advantages and losers disadvantages. If somebody loses his job and get dismissed for a long time, his chances to get employed again diminishes. Elders or not specialized workers share the same fate. Well-succeeded people reproduce the same virtual circle to their descendants as well as poor and unemployed people do the vicious circle to theirs, keeping the poor population excluded from society.

Solidarity economy establishes from association, communion, cooperation among individuals in order to begin an enterprise or to get a competitive leap, using a network structure also known as collective enterprises. And then merge, and mix with other values that traditional culture are not used to dialogue (Arroyo e Schuch, 2006, p.63). It represents more than a compensation for those who have no space into the formal work market as elders, women, and young people with low education level. It is an including and empowering economy, that leads its adepts to acquire education and qualification, because the bigger the results obtained the better the income share.

Singer (2010) assures that solidarity economy is a get back to principles attributed to democracy and to equality inside the enterprises, an insistence in self-management and a repudiation to wage earners. Solidarity economy was born a little after industrial capitalism, as a reaction to the artisan's impoverishment caused by machines spread and industrial

production organization. Been a solidarity entrepreneur doesn't mean not been competitive or not dispute market spaces. The difference from solidarity enterprises from traditional capitalists ones is related to a different way of living, valuing persons, environment, and sustainable practices for a long life journey.

Santos (2008) discerns competition from rivalry: competition can be healthy, when the battle among competitors for better final results, is based on mutual respect and social rules pre-established or not, while rivalry has its roots in bringing new weapons to the battle with the only purpose to win the best position. Rivalry is a war where all can be done. This results in loosening moral values and an invitation to violence. If life in present society is full of rivalry, is easy to understand corruption and selfishness as an ethic attitude based on the principle that every thought or action is to defend self-interests and not collective ones. Santos (2008) asserts that the association between currency and information tyranny leads us to accelerate hegemonic process, legitimated by a sole point of view, while the other process are digested or adapted actively or not, becoming homogeneous.

### 3. Urbanization and the challenges of the ABC Region

Methodist University of São Paulo is located at São Bernardo do Campo, at the heart of ABC region. Corresponding to the southeastern micro-region of the metropolitan area of São Paulo, ABC region covers an area of 841 km<sup>2</sup> and distributes its two million five hundred thousand inhabitants in seven cities. Every square kilometer of the micro-region is occupied by almost four thousand people. Located on the transit route between the coast and the highlands, the region was only discovered as a place to assist the development project of São Paulo, after the stream of immigrants began in 1877 and the establishment of the railway line by the British, at the same time, connecting São Paulo to the seaport of Santos. In 1920 its population was 25,215 inhabitants. Today the region is a significant part of the nearly 18 million of the metropolis of São Paulo. While the immigrants, especially Italians, Spaniards, Slavs, and later the Japanese, constitute the basis of the professional and cultural basis of its population until the thirties, the explosion of the industry-based capitalist project in the aftermath of World War II draws thousands of Brazilians from the poorest regions of the country. In the fifties begins the industrial pole of companies with a globalizing trend, following a Taylor-Ford style of the administration, with industries in the chemical, petrochemical, automotive parts, electro-mechanical branches, and the automobile manufacturers. This pole replaces the old style of the industry coming from the first industrial revolution of the early twentieth century, that is, the furniture and textile factories, which were based on cooperative ways. The socio-economic development associated with the building of new democratic experiments in the region would be unthinkable without the concurrence of the cultures of work, of renovation of public powers, and learning of the economic and financial forces, which since 1989 have organized themselves in forums, chambers and working groups. Today, the region has about five thousand industries and more than thirty thousand commercial outlets and service providers, and 35.34% of jobs are still available in the large transformation industries. To give an idea of the regional capacity to rebuild itself within the capitalist restructuring of the eighties and nineties, of the workforce of about one million two hundred thousand people, at least 20% were unemployed during the nineties. This number has been reduced to less than half in the last ten years, although one should not forget the informality and precarious work. The regional per capita income

remains at twice the national income. The gross domestic product of the region corresponds to 2.43% of Brazilian GDP and 7.21% of the Sao Paulo State. The country has a rate of 17% of illiterates and that of the Great ABC region does not go above 8%. The technological and functional illiteracy, however, is more problematic given the demands of the new industries and services, interested in maintaining the third position in the consumer market of the country. The data on the informal economy are similar to those of the state capital: 55% of the persons are engaged in the productive process.

Despite the ABC region industrialization, at least 350 square kilometers of this region that represents more than 50% of the total area are still covered with Atlantic Rainforest. This forest is one of the two major rain forest blocks within Brazil, and consists of a unique series of rainforest ecosystems. It once stretched almost continuously from the states of Rio Grande do Norte in the northeastern Brazil as far as south as Rio Grande do Sul, but now only 7% of this forest still remains intact, what underline the great importance of this region. This forested area is also part of the watershed of Billings Reservoir: an strategic resource for water supply and electric energy production for the whole Metropolitan Region of São Paulo. The total forested area in the ABC region is under federal, state and local law protection, although this not guarantees its real conservation, mainly threatened by real estate speculation and invasions of people claiming housing.

From the perspective of its economic and cultural history, the region crossed three cycles and lives today the fourth historic-cultural period. The first cycle can be understood as that of the passages, since it was the road for goods and natural products for the first cycle of commercial exchange of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The second cycle embodies the construction of the industrial identity, coupled with the political autonomy of the various cities, completed in the fifties during the twentieth century. It is during this cycle that is consolidated the symbolization of the region as a restless, and claimant space and cradle of social and political movements, which would greatly help to ensure the re-democratization of Brazil in the seventies and the eighties. The third cycle was that of an acute conflict between capital and labor, finished in the early '90s, which signaled intense socio-urban losses while helping Brazil to construct meanings for citizenship and social participation, accumulating values for the creation of the new consensus of the micro-regional society, already inserted in the fourth cycle in an accelerated process of globalization and known consequences.

Sader (1988) noted that the projects and practices of these organized people of the periphery, are a signal of victory over the physical and symbolic disintegration, the acquisition of rights amidst critical stress, the inter-communication of segments to produce the condition of being a person within the associativity of workers and the use of the wealth of the cities to promote a better income distribution.

It is a project of humanity, in which the gap between knowing and doing diminishes. Thus, these cultures organized around work, present since the beginning of the previous century, proofs and examples of social organization, creation of parties, associativity of residents and neighborhoods to demand public services infrastructures, labor and credit cooperatives (such as the società di mutuo soccorso, the old peoples' banks), and union's claims. It can be understood therefore that the social basis historically organized guarantees some regional organicity and promotes new managerial ventures. Perhaps it can be of less interest the fact that three of the seven cities in the region are among the best fifty to live in Brazil than discover in these cultures defined by work a process fully favorable to management developed in a direct way by the different sectors of society.



Santos (1998, pp. 19-20) shows that "the (transnationalized) territory reaffirms itself by the place. (...) It is wise, however, to remember that thanks to the miracles allowed by science, technology and information, the forces that create fragmentation may in other circumstances, serve their opposite." This micro-region, with large contingents of workers connected by multiple origins, coped with the senses of the periphery and overcame them. This makes it difficult to accept new and crueler forms of living in the economic, political, and cultural periphery. It is not without reason that in this regional social micro-physic, the coordinating institution of the Regional Literacy Movement is the Steelworkers Union. From 1997 to 2008 about 70,000 people overcame illiteracy. Today the municipalities are developing new educational policy for youth and adults from the new forms of technological illiteracy, with promising experiences, especially by the proximity of universities in the region.

To achieve strategic objectives and deepen themes opened by the breakdown of those supply chains derived from the industrial policy of fifties, the civil society in the region and the public administration of the seven cities created new institutions and new methods of social articulation. Strictly speaking, a new policy agenda. Based on European and American experiences, discussed at international seminars held in Brazil and abroad, were created between 1991 and 1998 three institutions that produce, transmit and negotiate information and service: The Consórcio Intermunicipal das Bacias do Tamanduateí e Billings (Inter-cities Consortium of the Tamanduateí and Billings Watersheds), commonly called Regional Consortium, the Câmara Regional do Grande ABC (Great ABC Regional Chamber) and the Agência de Desenvolvimento Econômico (Economic Development Agency). The Consortium, formed by the seven mayors and their advisers, specialized in regional policies of priority, is the place where the initial studies about programs and policies are generated. Formed in 1991, it has been concerned especially with sustained development, final disposal of waste, revitalization of the productive chains, creation of an infrastructure for business tourism and ecological tourism, prioritization of children and adolescents at risk and the combat against several forms of illiteracy. The Regional Chamber, made up of mayors, advisers, state representatives, civil servants of the state of São Paulo, and representatives of civil society in the region, began its activities in March 1997. It sought to organize priorities, expand studies by means of ten working groups, approve 31 basic demands of the region and negotiate agreements and processes of implementation of policies and actions, decided by consensus, with the state government and with the Union. The Board was constituted symbolically. In addition to politicians and managers in the region, the agreement of their creation (12.03.1997) was signed by five members of the Citizens' Forum, five representatives of the productive arrangements and five union officials nominated by their peers. The main agreements, accompanied by representatives of society, prioritized the implementation of a technology hub in the region, increase of the competitiveness of the production chains, creation of new drainage systems of rain waters and industrial effluents, establishment of the regional hospital, greater offer of popular housing, establishment of the federal university, workers' qualification for new jobs, revitalization of industrial processes in still productive plants - for example, the furniture industry -, improvement of public transportation, development of opportunities for the first job, and strengthening of the movement in favor of impoverished children and adolescents.

For its part, the Economic Development Agency is the product of the previous institutions. It is both a database and tool for regional marketing. It concentrates socio-economic information, develops research, supports and fosters the development of companies

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with a view to sustainable development. It is a public-private organization (51% private, 49% public), while the Regional Chamber is a political instrument of partnership between the powers and the Consortium an official core for the generation of projects and identification of needs in the various public policies. Of fundamental importance for the creation of the Chamber and the Agency was the formation of the Citizenship Forum, an exclusive organ of the civil society, begun in 1994 by dozens of associations, schools, unions and service clubs. It acted as an ombudsman during the whole process, encouraging, criticizing and analyzing the actions of the Consortium, of the Chamber, and the Agency.

As it is possible to see, the permitted agenda of the regional micro-physics meant a necessary moment of political consciousness, an act of identification with the movement of managing the diversified public good in the region. Following that, international experiences contributed to the discussion of cases and the discovery of new projects. The best working relationships were established with the Ruhr Valley, Detroit, Great Leipzig, Rotterdam, Lombardy, and the German area of Baden-Württemberg, plus the social inclusion projects in Latin America, linked by the Mercocities project. The presence of former Mayor Celso Augusto Daniel was instrumental for the knowledge, debate and presentation of regional proposals. Bulletins of unions and trade associations analyzed continuously the issues of the regional crisis and at least one hundred theses and dissertations of the major Brazilian universities cataloged by the Laboratory on Regionality and Management (USCS) and by the Celso Daniel Chair on Cities' Management (UMESP) attest to the importance of the micro-regional debate.

In truth, it is necessary to say that two groups of institutions are not yet fully involved in this mode of management: universities and city councils. The first ones, despite the analysis and criticism, only recently began to evaluate the new regional dynamics and the importance of critical mass for the strengthening of projects agreed upon, unlike what occurs, for example, in Lombardy and Baden-Württemberg, especially in agencies and observatories. For their part, the legislative chambers, with exceptions, still prefer a traditional way, even archaic, of doing politics. The new political actors overcame, then, the traditional social representations, built upon roles and functions sanctioned by the old politics. The representations that are directly created are engendered in the society that best felt the challenges, whether in the emptying of the executive power, whether at the work in the neighborhood or in the production and distribution that were lived on the factory floor. The legislative representations resemble those whom the poet called "farmers of the air"<sup>1</sup>, since their domain spaces are unconnected to what the poet also called "sense of world." Contrary to what waited the political history, the popular vote, when transports these people to the legislative palaces, also trans vests them. Their look upon the city becomes wrapped up in their own myths of interest, sometimes collective, but really myths of usurped communities.

In contrast, what should be highlighted in this new process of dialogue, which creates communication and new social mediations, is that the stigma of exclusion – that is known in immigration and migratory processes, that is combated in movements for the urbanization of slums, that is widely publicized by the strong regional unions – became transparent and was made public in all its breadth what led to projects and practices to overcome them.

#### **4. The Methodist University Sustainable Program (MUSP)**

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<sup>1</sup> The expression was coined by the Brazilian poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade.

Methodist University of Sao Paulo has 26,564 undergraduate students distributed in the knowledge areas of humanities, communication, business, science and technology, totaling 51 undergraduate programs. In addition it runs 43 specialization and six MSc and PhD programs, totaling 1,000 students. The institution has 1,713 employees, 537 professors and lecturers and 94 interns. The university has great regional influence and is recognized as the third-best private university of Sao Paulo state.

The Methodist University Sustainable Program (MUSP) began to take form at 2008, during the discussions of the Political-Pedagogic Project (PPP) of the university. This document describes the main policies adopted by the university. Matarazzo-Neuberger, one of the authors, suggested the creation of a Sustainability Axis, and the meetings to renew PPP resulted in the adoption of sustainability as a new core value in addition to two others already existent, namely, Christianity and Common Good. The PPP was approved by the University Council and presented to the academic community by the end of 2008. Sustainability has been recognized since then as a central value in the institution, and has opened a new and strong scenario for change.

The initial plan of MUSP defined two major structuring components: (1) an Educational Program, designed to introduce sustainability in a transversal way through all the undergraduate courses; and (2) Structural Diagnosis of three environmental resources: water, energy and greenhouse gases emissions, in order to offer subsidies to plan the reduction of the ecological footprint of the university. This initial plan provided enough space for incorporation of other ideas coming from university members. The MUSP was launched in early April 2009.

The structural diagnosis was conducted through June to December 2009. Data for the last three years of water and energy consumption was collected and analyzed. The report was presented to the Sustainability Committee and gave birth to a series of initiatives dedicated to reduce the university ecological footprint.

The elaboration of the educational program began in May and June 2009, when meetings with directors and course coordinators of all faculties happened. The objective was to identify which modules in every undergraduate program could begin to introduce sustainability into their courses. A fundamental principle of the MUSP was that sustainability should not be treated as one more discipline within current curricula, but should be transversally mainstreamed into curricula in order to really be effective. The mind map methodology was used in these meetings to identify in each faculty themes, areas and ways in which sustainability could be mainstreamed.

A group of professors and lecturers was identified. This group was responsible for implementing sustainability in the curricula of each course and was invited to join the Education for Sustainability Leadership Program in Higher Education (FLESES, in Portuguese).

Opening the door for emerging new leaders was viewed as a *sine quo non* condition for the development of the program. Chase and Rowland (2004: 104) demonstrated that the success of higher education sustainability projects was based on decentralized leadership structure, avoiding a small group becoming ‘the’ environmental organization on campus and allowing other groups to emerge and play critical roles. Keeping its focus on education for sustainability through faculty development could give rise to a university-wide commitment that was one of the main objectives of MUSP.



FLESES was designed as a modular program. Module I was named ‘Sustainable Futures: A collective creation’. FLESES Module II was devoted to developing procedures and techniques to work with sustainability issues with students and Module III was related to the systematization and sharing of the results obtained by each undergraduate program in the implementation of sustainability within its curricula. The objectives of these modules were to allow the understanding of the relations between sustainability and future scenarios, to reflect on the relationship of professional practice and planetary sustainability in the context of the careers offered in the university, to delineate the role envisioned for university students in the future, to introduce new forms of learning and teaching and to stimulate the rising of a learning community devoted to sustainability.

While designing the modules, sustainability was considered an emergent quality arising from sets of relationships in a system, whether viewed at the macro or micro scale. As Sterling (2004: 55) states, sustainability is likely to arise depending upon the degree to which our attention shifts from ‘things’ to relationships, and from a segregated and dualistic view of the world towards an integrative and participative perspective. This involves more than a simple and dualistic environmentalism and indicates, instead, the need for ‘whole system thinking’. The activities, reflections, text readings and videos chosen to be part of the modules immersed the participants in this kind of vision, offering a glimpse of how we can create the opportunity for people to imagine and work towards life-centered forms of development. The Earth Charter was adopted as a guideline for FLESES, because it represents an important contribution for a holistic and integrated vision of the social and environmental problems of humanity.

Until this moment, 168 professors and lecturers representing all undergraduate courses of the university and by 20 administrative managers attended FLESES. The main objective of this initiative was to establish a real sustainability academy—a learning community that will be responsible for introducing sustainability transversally in university curricula, develop research and engage community and stakeholders aiming to improve the local environment. Our goal for the next two years is to offer FLESES to all professors and lecturers of the university.

One of the main objectives of an education for sustainability program should be to create space for social learning that includes spaces for alternative paths of development; for new ways of thinking, valuing and doing; for participation minimally distorted by power relations; for pluralism, diversity and minority perspectives; for deep consensus, but also for respectful disagreement and differences; for autonomous and deviant thinking; for self-determination; and finally, for contextual differences (Wals and Corcoran 2004: 224). The design of the Educational Program of MUSP allowed the creation of these spaces and following the principles of the program, was built bottom-up, considering the points of view and experience already embodied in the academy.

By the first semester of 2010, sustainability was introduced in the curricula of all undergraduate courses. Mitigation measures and monitoring plans to reduce the university’s footprint were also implemented. Results of the MUSP can be seen into: the increase number of professors and lecturers enrolled since the beginning; the increasing production in the area of sustainability into academic programs; prizes won by students like the 2010 Santander Sustainability Challenges and on extension and research programs developed like the Montanhão project.

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## **5. The Montanhão Community Project**

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The Montanhão Community Project was designed by professors and students of the Management and Services Faculty of our university three years ago and received the official name of Services and Management Network for a Solidarity Community. Solidarity economy is defined as a set of economic activities, like production, distribution, consumption and credit, organized and conducted collectively by workers (SENAES: 11, 2006). Economy solidarity researches as a consensus assert that community of workers that adopt this should do it with a collectively, communitarian and solidary character and not following the established society rules for labor and being their proper managers.

Methodist University already had a partnership with Associação de Resgate Humano e Cidadania Padre Leo Comissari, a local league community that is responsible to promote a Solidarity Economy Network in the Montanhão neighborhood. At the beginning of the last decade they already supported one hundred informal small enterprises.

Our main goals for this Project were:

1. To develop entrepreneurs plans, which value the balance between personal and collective interests, with common goals.
2. To offer technical support for the network enterprises.
3. To develop negotiator skills for the network entrepreneurs, members of the Municipality Forum of Solidarity Economy.
4. To support and participate in meetings and trainings promoted by community league developing skills linked with sustainability, planning and designing, best practices, human resources management, conflict solutions and solidarity economy.
5. To link other universities areas and programs demanded by the league and the developing enterprises.

To begin the project we conducted a diagnosis of the Montanhão community considering cultural aspects and enterprises profile of the network and their results. We found out that they didn't have a proper way to share their achievements and experiences and we suggested community meetings called Listener University that promoted deep discussions about solidarity economy and sustainability, and caused reflections on the kind of relationship and practices they already established between them and their suppliers and clients. This process was the basis to shape the future university group interventions at this community.

During the Listener University Meetings were discussed the results they achieved, their hopes and fears, labor laws, human resources conflicts and management, negotiation skills and how the enterprises linked to the network should work and accept the local social coin named "Comissari", how they could support and help each other, in order to attract more entrepreneurs to the network and how they could work collectively and support their needs as a community. All those themes are related to sustainability in the way we developed it at MUSP looking to the social, economic and environmental issues and creating a vision that brings together in a systemic way of living.

We could develop a methodology to work with the network and the social incubator of the Padre Leo league: all the information, methodologies and experiences was summarized and available in seven papers published on our digital magazine (<https://www.metodista.br/revistas/revistas-ims/index.php/REGS/article/view/2776>) and at XXXV ENANPAD 2011 meeting ([http://www.anpad.org.br/trabalho\\_popup.php?cod\\_edicao\\_trabalho=13308](http://www.anpad.org.br/trabalho_popup.php?cod_edicao_trabalho=13308)). We are publishing the book *Work, Solidarity Economy and Social Development: The case of the Montanhão Community Network on Solidarity Economy* that is already in the press. By this

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methodology we met every month with the managers from: the Padre Leo Comissari Association and the Diadema Public Incubator, in order to contribute to the incubation methodology followed by them. We also participated on the activities related to planning and other periodic meetings held to orient the enterprises that were in development in the community solidarity economy network. As a result three new enterprises were established that hired 8 persons, during 2011.

On September 2010, we promoted the Seminar: Incubation methodology: challenges and paths that enrolled students, professors, entrepreneurs, and government representatives from Diadema, Santo André, Osasco e Mauá, all nearby cities. Difficulties and challenges to the incubation process were discussed, as well as the usual incubation methodologies. The major points were about: time definition for the incubation period; development of basic skills to follow the process; participant's empowerment; improvement of worker income along the process and ways to develop an active network involving enterprises and incubators.

We developed skills and practices demanded by the community of Padre Leo association, committed with the stimuli and promotion of meetings to share best practices and empower the solidarity economy network. Students and lecturers could share their knowledge and experience and be inspired by real cases and real people. We also created an indicator for measuring income and business into the Network of Montanhão. Diadema communities are already using those indicators.

Our major gaps were related to how could we keep a solidarity behavior embedded on network entrepreneurs as their enterprises grew. What we could observe was that on the absence of lecturers and students intercession, solidarity was abandoned and individualistic behavior patterns prevail.

## 6. Creating a sustainable solidarity economy model

Making the change happens while immersed into the system is for sure the great challenge on developing a sustainable solidarity economy model. To create really collaborative models that confronts the values of the dominant culture, we have to reflect about the ethos we should bring to those incubators experience, more than only developing skills and methodology for growing enterprises. What we see happening, by experience, is when entrepreneurs are succeeded they repeat the dominant culture model, exploring workers and getting bigger profits, no matter how, when and where. When their business got bigger profits they arouse the interests of other organizations and are sold, generating a capital that usually is lost in some years bringing their owners to the beginning of the spiral again, more skeptical and hopeless for real changes this time.

This is how we have to bringing on collaboration in this process. Collaboration is more than coordination or cooperation. While coordination and cooperation can be elements of collaboration, the collaborative process is longer-term and more integrated. It involves a greater degree of interactions, commitment and complexity. On the plus side for a complex predicament like sustainability, it seems that the more people understand the interconnected nature of a problem, the more they are likely to collaborate (McKenzie, 2013).

Collaboration occurs within a multilayered context of political, legal, socioeconomic, environmental, and other drivers (Emerson et al., 2012). The more drivers present and recognized by participants, the more likely a collaboration will be initiated, and this is what we need to bring to the incubator process and discussions. We need to discuss and reveals the drivers of collaboration Emerson et al., (2012) and Thomson and Perry (2006) enrolled like:

complexity; high levels of interdependence/network connectedness; need for risk sharing; resource conditions/scarcity; previous history of efforts to collaborate; situation in which each partner has resources that other partners need; prior failure to address issues; political dynamics/power relations; policy/legal frameworks and levels of conflict/trust.

There is a range of participatory processes that can be utilized to facilitate groups effectively. Different methods can be woven together to suit the needs of the process. These methods are largely ‘dialogue-based’. Examples include: Theory U; Appreciative Inquiry; The Circle; World Café; Open Space Technology and Pro Action Café. For an informative overview of these approaches and participatory processes in general, we can follow the participatory process design guide, *The Weave: Participatory Process Design Guide for Strategic Sustainable Development* (Meisterheim et al., 2011).

To measure if our objectives of introducing a real collaborative model are succeeded we can monitor and report the outcomes using the following checklists and indicators as suggested by McKenzie (2013): achievement of goals; new institutions and/or changing inter-organizational culture; innovative strategies; new modes of discourse; creating shared meaning; redistribution of power; self-governing partnerships, coordination, joint learning and joint action; the creation of capacity to leverage resources and create results on the ground; the creation of social, intellectual, and political capital; high-quality agreements (and perhaps even implementation of agreements!); increasing interaction, more co-evolution and less destructive conflict among partners; transactions among organizations become transformed into socially embedded relationships, new norms and social heuristics for addressing public problems and changes in the pre-existing or projected conditions of the system.

Students, lecturers and professors need to dive deep into collaborative process in order to conduct research and community work based on it. Creating the experiential knowledge based environment for this is an objective of the recent launched Sustainability Center, an inter and trans disciplinary space that will enroll professors, lecturers, administrative employees and students from all faculties, as well as communities and business companies to apply innovative technologies on creating a path to a sustainable way of living. The Center creation has its roots in the MUSP and will enhance and enlarge the sustainability culture in our university, creating the container for discussing new social and scientific technologies to achieve a model of development that has sustainability as a the main guide. The center includes a Green Business Incubator and a Biomimicry Lab to develop new technologies inspired by nature and will integrate former experiences and projects we developed with communities like Montanhão, business companies and higher education for sustainability.

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Center for Organization Studies (CORS)

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