



Associativity in Alternative Economies, Key Factors to Generate Sustainable EPS in Ecuador

Associatividade em Economias Alternativas, Fatores-chave para Gerar EPS Sustentável no Equador*

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ABSTRACT

Socio-economic systems worldwide suffer effects from capitalism, and generate inequality gaps, in the face of these events, the Popular and Solidarity Economies (*Economías Populares y Solidarias - EPS*) is a key tool in the sustainability of associated enterprises, those who reached relevance in the quarantine and states of exception (Covid-19), people suffered shortages due to the closure of shops, as a result, entrepreneurs taking risks and possible contagion, supplied food, medicines and other products to homes. But, as the big box stores began to cater to the public, gradually many businesses disappeared. This work aims to analyze the elements present in alternative economies and how they can help the growth and sustainability of EPS, applying a methodology with a social hermeneutic approach, to know the characteristics of these economies and determine what results of growth and development can be obtained if working associatively. The results and discussion determine that associativity with innovative capacity, good governance, and social commitment, create sustainable and competitive business models. Therefore, cooperative and community businesses must coexist transformational leadership behaviors, to produce fair trade and prices. The leaders of the course, based on optimal social equity, must allocate resources so that the most disadvantaged sectors have the same opportunities for a healthy, productive life.

RESÚMEN

Los sistemas socio-económicos a nivel mundial sufren efectos provenientes del capitalismo, y generan brechas de desigualdad, frente a estos eventos las Economías Populares y Solidarias (EPS) es una herramienta clave en la sostenibilidad de emprendimientos asociados, quienes alcanzaron relevancia en la cuarentena y estados de excepción (Covid-19), las personas sufrían desabastecimientos por cierre de los comercios, como consecuencia, emprendedores asumiendo riesgos y posibles contagios, aprovisionaron víveres, medicinas y otros productos a los domicilios. Pero, a medida que las grandes tiendas empezaron a atender al público, gradualmente muchos negocios desapareciendo. Este trabajo tiene como **objetivo** analizar los elementos presentes en las economías alternativas y cómo estas pueden ayudar al crecimiento y sustentabilidad de las EPS, aplicando una **metodología** con enfoque hermenéutico social, para conocer las características propias de estas economías y determinar qué resultados de crecimiento y desarrollo se pueden obtener si se trabaja de forma asociativa. Los **resultados** y **discusión**, determinan que la asociatividad con capacidad innovadora, buen gobierno, y compromiso social, crean modelos de negocio sostenible y competitivos. Por lo que, debe coexistir en los negocios cooperativos y comunitarios comportamientos de liderazgo transformacional, para producir comercio y precio justo. Los gobernantes de curso, en función de equidad social óptima deben asignar los recursos para que los sectores más desfavorecidos, tengan las mismas oportunidades de vida saludable, productiva.

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Introduction

In this changing, vertiginous world and with an economy where large supermarket chains lead, it highlights economic disparities, putting on stage large sectors with the greatest poverty gap, conditions that contribute to the processes of human inequality (Silva Alvarado, Sacón Klinger, Rodríguez Enríquez, & Holguín Cedeño, 2022). In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in the face of restrictions derived from it, including quarantine, small businesses with home sales emerged, to respond to prevailing needs, strengthening home delivery with delivery, however, some ventures, after the quarantine and states of exception were disappearing.

Which leads to the conclusion that entrepreneurship as actions led by leaders who seek resilience Silva Alvarado, Flores Abarca, Jiménez Mendoza & Silva Alvarado (2021), must consider new sustainable strategies, which allow them to advance in this world where the economy of capitalism prevails to the detriment of more unprotected social classes and with fewer competitive advantages. That is why, if they act separately, they will not be able to overcome obstacles, which can be achieved if they work in an associated manner and allow them an economic development balanced approach with justice, solidarity and equity, which to date and with few exceptions are not evident in most organizations (López Q., 2020), by virtue of the fact that it requires a greater holistic approach.

In this sense, associativity as a strategy contributes directly to improving the administrative, commercial and/or productive capacity of small and medium enterprises in a country. For this precept to be fulfilled, commitment, trust, loyalty, honesty, collaborative-shared work must coexist, which means internal democracy and good governance. If the above does not exist, associativity does not work, since it must be understood as the world of “social capital” constituted as a social commitment of good living, and not of market capital.

In this way, and in agreement with Flores & Rello (2001), social capital must be available and for the common benefit, to facilitate economic development and democracy for all its members. Therefore, good governance as a starting point in all actions of the organization, will allow sustainable Popular and Solidarity Economies (EPS), so there must be a democracy for development and sustainability in a socioeconomic and cultural sense, which lead to a positive social transformation.

As argued in this paper, the question arises: how alternative economies can influence the development and sustainability of popular and solidarity economies? So a contribution is generated that can help with new ways of bringing alternative economies, one of them is the

trend of circular economies, once it's demonstrated, this work will contribute significantly to the popular and solidarity economies EPS, so that they associate to generate greater competitiveness and sustainability to the sector of the other economy.

Method

The work has a qualitative explanatory approach that allows multidisciplinary analysis of associative enterprises in Ecuador, with a social hermeneutic perspective. It tries to demonstrate that the current way of how mostly non-associated enterprises are managed, converge in economic, social and cultural crisis, taking into account that the most important thing within a community conglomerate is accessibility to daily sustenance, education and health, and this is not possible without a source of decent work, the inalienable right of the human being at the international level, therefore, it's necessary to consolidate in the Popular and Solidarity Economies (*Economías Populares y Solidarias*), in an empathetic, democratic associative way and with good governance, to achieve sustainability. However, the Ecuadorian state must promote comprehensive public policies in alternative economies, such as community agribusiness, circular economies that point to the green economy as a factor of mitigation to climate change. On the above, the documentary information focuses on analyzing the various criteria of experts, as well as approaches on issues of cooperativism, social transformation, innovative ideas, entrepreneurship and alternative economies, capable of generating sustainable socioeconomic development for equality and social equity.

Specific activities were carried out such as bibliography compilation, we worked with a group of entrepreneurs, where interviews were conducted with the application of questionnaires to obtain adequate information to answer the question posed, as well as the objective proposed in this work. With the scope of establishing whether alternative economies can influence the sustainable development of Popular and Solidarity Economies (*Economías Populares y Solidarias - EPS*) in Ecuador.

Development

Cooperativism and social transformation

Cooperativism or associativity is considered as an integral tool that promotes socioeconomic development, capable of creating and distributing the wealth generated by all the participants of the same, promotes social capital equitably (Alcántara, Sampaio, & Uriarte, 2018), requires permanent mutual support to achieve better living conditions, allowing a positive social transformation, built from another integral approach, whose basis is defined as a global view based on other models of altruistic people, committed to the common good, in

search of a better society (Azkarate-Iturbe, Vitoria Gallastegi, Aritzeta Galan, & Gallettebeitia Gabiola, 2020).

Under the reasons stated above, associativity is and must be, permanently, an organization of people voluntarily and in solidarity, who seek to unite to build the common good whose purpose is “a free, just and supportive society” in accordance with the Ilo (2015). It seeks, therefore, to obtain an economy focused on sustaining life (Luque González & Peñaherrera Melo, 2021), and allow equality of their rights in groups, and that the benefits are distributed equitably and without restriction (Fernández S, 2006). In this virtue, it must focus on a cooperativism with a human face, capable of positively impacting the subsistence of its members, considering three inseparable basic dimensions: Economic, Productive and Social (López Q., 2020), in order to establish appropriate conditions for each of its associates.

In this sense, there must be human cooperative skills (Azkarate-Iturbe et al, 2020), where people have the ability to work collaboratively, for this will necessarily coexist edges such as the motivation generated by leaders. Trust, fulfillment of objectives, tolerance and empathy. Governance with internal democracy, all aimed at the well-being of the entire organization in an intrinsic and mutually binding way. With this premise, cooperativism is the north to follow for sustainable socioeconomic development, it’s binding on the search for common prosperity, based on the economic solvency of a group of citizens (López Q., 2020).

Since the beginning of humanity, people have understood that it’s not possible to achieve common objectives unless they are organized or associated, as a way to establish and improve living conditions, in the face of an increasingly complex and competitive society, where the gap of poverty and inequality is very marked by insufficient political decision. The above reasons are necessary to generate competitiveness and productivity that lead to the community welfare of all those involved in it, this is a binding part for positive social transformation, required to overcome situations such as lack of opportunities, employment, health, safety, among others. In these scenarios lies, for sustainable socioeconomic development, collective action (Sánchez Martínez, Parra Vázquez, & Zamora Lomelí, 2021) is the link of associativity of any gender, united with the common, democratic and solidary objective to transform their conditions or real life situation, born of ideas, intentions, proposals and common interests, seek to transform their collective problems to a better reality, considering themselves social builders, who shape at their own pace a more human development from the needs of each individual (López Q., 2020).

It’s pertinent to point out that socio-economic development will be sustainable, as long as there is an associative link of any gender, united with the common, democratic and solidary objective to transform their conditions or living situation, born of ideas, intentions, proposals and desires, whose interest and purpose are common, and from a very egalitarian perspective

seek to modify their social problems to a better reality, in this sense they socially construct and mold at their own pace a more human development to evolve from the needs of each individual (López Q., 2020). The transformation, social as a common term in the social sciences, focuses on the factors and causes that can contribute to significant changes in the social, economic and cultural spheres and that highlight those social drivers (Brondizio, et al., 2016), where the need for active participation of young people takes importance, who must seek to obtain and strengthen skills, skills and competencies to create responses to the problems of a society, promoting collaborative work, identifying and respecting social schemes, in a multiverse and cultural Ecuador, giving rise to positive social transition. (Guidiño Cícero, 2018).

For its part, UNESCO (2021) maintains that for the existence of true social transformations, inclusion and social innovation are required, prioritizing the attention of vulnerable, disadvantaged and excluded people, otherwise the indices of poverty and inequalities will increase, young people being the most affected because every day there are fewer opportunities for decent work (Somavía, 2014), education and survival, as established in the OIT regarding ODS 8, in the 2030 agenda, (ONU, 2015) hence the great importance that today's youth are the main actors of social changes, In which case too, parents and relatives must put themselves in the same fight, to grant a better scenario for their environment. These changes make it necessary to find innovative solutions that respect values such as peace, human dignity, gender equality, non-violence and non-discrimination. (UNESCO, 2021).

Sustainable alternative economies and innovative solutions

Much is discussed about alternative economies, and these can adopt different names, depending on the ideologues and their proposals, regardless of whether we talk about circular economy, community, ecological, agrotourism et cetera, all lean towards the organized and planned sustainability of their economic activities, whose benefit objectives are socially and environmentally just and equitable. They are those that allow working in parallel with traditional or market economies, they try to solve the disparity and poverty gaps, but they must be more constant and organized to meet their objectives, as well as the challenge of reducing the gaps identified, reasons why collaborative work is key to overcoming such inequities.

All entrepreneurship be these: agribusiness, agrotourism, marketing chains and collection centers, businesses parallel to agriculture, producers who work in isolation, selling their products to intermediaries and there is no commitment to obtain a fair price for their agricultural production, in which the inputs they use are relatively expensive compared to the utility they obtain, when selling to intermediaries. To overcome this limitation, networks or circuits of community-solidarity economies must be established to improve living conditions by applying win-win, as established (Covey, 1997), because this habit enables mutual respect

and benefit promoting sustainability in a fair and equitable way, example you have a farm, with rivers, and natural attractions, where you can start with a tourist whereabouts including rooms, your neighbors have a plot of corn who can sell cakes, and tortillas derived from their fruits, another neighbor has a store, the other dispenses food. If we all support each business as if it were our own, we will all win.

We cannot forget that in times of pandemic the primary production sectors such as agriculture, livestock and fishing, were those that sustained the basic needs of citizens and therefore the Ecuadorian economy, however these areas are the least favored in social and economic terms, which is why we must continue betting on the strengthening of these spheres and that public policies focus especially on producers who tirelessly work the land and who are usually the most vulnerable to the profits they can make from selling their products.

It can be intuited that when dealing with the application and strengthening of alternative economies, we try to focus a new horizon on life, from perspectives according to the daily and constant struggle of people or non-profit organizations, but also as a civic duty and rights enshrined in the constitution must coexist the link to the government for the achievement and subsequent application of public policies, without detaching from the collaborative, participatory and binding work of all actors to be benefited as an inherent part, as indicated (Cañete & Guaipalin, 2016), these policies should tend to reduce inequalities, consistent with alternative economies that seek approaches from a more humane, supportive and participatory base. These economies try to face the problems that people and the community have today and give them a coherent solution, compatible with society, environmental protection and needs of every society.

Manfred Max Neef, cited by Gonzáles Ríos (2012), argues that economies, without exception, cannot be on the margins of ecosystems, for such reasons there must be an ecologically responsible circular economy that enables an adequate balance, the same constitution of the republic establishes the necessary links that correspond to social responsibility for sustainability and sustainability of nature in all its aspects Article 283 (National Assembly Ecuador CRE, 2008), in this sense it's necessary to aim at strengthening agriculture as a bastion of the economy of the countryside that is where the products originate to satisfy the needs of the human being, a true balance must be generated so that intermediaries and those who have the monopoly of the traditional economy, leave adequate profit space to the primary sector of the food chain. Under this approach, the idea is that community economies are produced to improve the community situation at the local, regional and global levels, of course respecting the environment, whose purpose is to guarantee the controlled consumption of the resources provided by nature, as suggested Torrodero Numpaque & Ramírez Cendero (2020).

Alternative economies seek to regulate and promote qualitative development (Coraggio, 2010) in tune with Popular, Social and Solidarity Economies in accordance with the current Ecuadorian constitution to promote good living (Sumak Kawsay) in harmony with nature to all its associates. Along the same lines, it stands out Zubero Beaskoetxea (2019), that if social and ecological dimensions are not considered in alternative economies, we cannot conceive the idea that they are sustainable. The same author argues that if there is no degree of scientific knowledge and not only empirical, as well as good governance-where there is democracy, equity and empathy in decision-making, empathy, teamwork, and empowerment, but above all clear and defined rules regarding the activities to be developed and the functions of each partner, and each administrator, alternative economies will not be able to compete at the level of market economies within their levels of scale not only at the local level, but beyond borders by their management and acceptance of the beneficiary public. In this sense, by not applying these actions, they will cease to be sustainable and the efforts will be diluted along the way.

In accordance with what has been described in previous lines and to conclude with this section, it's inferred that, to maintain sustainable alternative economies, it's not only necessary to think about it's planning, which is the cornerstone where a business is based, which must adjust to reality, and be modified according to changes in the environment, but also to think about the appropriate way of how risk is managed (Thi Kim Chung & Mehtha, 2016), of the environment, internally and externally, to move towards the best possible paths and for its own expansion if it takes place.

For his part López Q. (2020) argues that associativity through cooperativism is constituted as an alternative to be able to compete on par with the market economy. In this case and as enshrined in Article 283 of the Ecuadorian Constitution (National Assembly Ecuador CRE/*Asamblea Nacional Ecuador CRE, 2008*), the human being must be privileged over economic capital, in accordance with the provisions of the (National Assembly Ecuador LOEPS/*Asamblea Nacional Ecuador LOEPS, 2011*) that in its management to generate income, citizens can do so based on relationships of solidarity, cooperation and reciprocity, with innovative plans and solutions that are accompanied by social equity, in view of the fact that, without this and in the words of Calvo Palomares, Ricard; Portet Thebes, Jaume; Bou Pastor, Monica (2016), no sustainable development is possible. These are more than enough reasons to establish scenarios of equality for all and that generates a better quality of life for all, not for a few, given that the alternative economy seeks the balance of equality/inequality, in an equitable, fair and supportive manner and tends to a common good. In this sense, it's required to be built from solid, organized and planned bases in order to satisfy the basic needs of the human being, associativity is capable of creating alternative responses and changes in the face of economic crises that are currently experienced as a post-pandemic effect in Ecuador and worldwide.

Reflecting and although there are many meanings about innovative solutions, these must be the result of the persistence of visionary entrepreneurs (Cañete & Guaipalin, 2016) that allow them to be sustained over time, these ventures with a very focused and visionary idea will allow the sustainability of family economies, as they are able to become in an organized and planned way in true marketing networks. So, any innovative solution must start from creative thinking, with the ability to modify reality as it maintains (De Bono, 1994), a reality that can only be changed by maintaining a mindset open to new approaches, paradigms and assuming new challenges (Sánchez, 2020). Paraphrasing Edward de Bono, we can say that without creativity we would be reaping the same, therefore, more imagination is required to give innovative solutions, which start from the inventiveness which the human being has from a prospective perspective.

Fully agreeing with Montoya Ríos (2012), problems must be solved creatively and innovatively as a key element of adaptability in the face of constant changes in the social and economic environment, it's therefore necessary that people use their abilities and skills such as reasoning, the way of thinking, the way in which the information obtained will be used to create solutions according to the problem that arises at the moment, human beings must have the ability to visualize different causes and find several solutions through their creative techniques, which undoubtedly facilitates the selection of possible alternatives to the solution of the problem of that moment, because it's not enough to find a way to reach the expected result, but must have alternative resolution plans in a creative and innovative way.

In this sense and aligned with what it establishes Kahan (2022), for businesses to be successful they must consider aspects related to interactive-incremental development to walk on solid ground and constantly validate the client's expectations about the good or service, which includes responding in less time, but also going hand in hand with the creation of intermediate goods or services. It's added to maintain strengthened, prospective teams and, if possible, with maximum autonomy in decision-making without them bending in line with objectives and goals. Undoubtedly, another key factor for this purpose is empathy, which is a fundamental tool in meeting the needs of the user, which must be applied universally within the business, therefore, the empathy of the team for them as for the client will be the ones with the greatest result in the sustainability of the same.

For its part, UNESCO (2021a) argues that innovative solutions must point towards a proposal of indivisible work of a country: government, social-human science communities, and civil society, in order to establish better procedures for the application of knowledge-action, these forms of connection are key factors for true positive social change. The proposals of innovative ideas that promote a transformation of positive paradigms in the community must be conceived under three fundamental objectives such as:

- ✓ Apply knowledge on social and human sciences in policy support and capacity building;
- ✓ Transmit knowledge with action research activities;
- ✓ Contribute to national and international policy debates and agendas.

As stated so far, and although many may be the key factors for the sustainability of associative enterprises, it's inferred that innovative solutions allow social innovation, a change of paradigms a way out of the *status quo* or our comfort zone, in this virtue social entrepreneurship has become alternatives to solve inequalities and reduce poverty gaps. In agreement with González Ríos (2012), the key factors to maintain sustainable EPS consist of permanently applying and strengthening ethical values, solidarity, empathy, equity, and inclusiveness, to face the inequality gaps that are increasingly broad and complex. Consequently, the idea is to generate solidarity economies that change the current socioeconomic scenario, mainly considering the primary sector of the food chain with a focus on circular economies.

Cooperative logistics for win-win agreements

Another key factor for sustainable EPS is the cooperation and use of the logistics that each venture or business may have, the idea is to benefit each other through an approach of prospectivity and cooperation, within them as it maintains Brandenburger & Nalebuff (1996) and not competition, because in the companies that compete with each other, there are intrinsically complementary elements between the parties and that both of them necessarily need, that is, synergy is created, although it's obvious that some managers do not want to accept reality and continue to compete, there are few exceptions that have seen that cooperating achieves a balance and development for both parties, in this sense we all need everyone and win-win must be established to be sustainable, regardless of whether they are agribusiness, community enterprises or individual.

Logistics, as argues Servera-Francés (2010), was initially associated with the activities of physical distribution such as transport and storage of products, obtained from the primary sector such as agriculture and livestock, given that at that time they were the most predominant activities, that is why the main thing was to get the products to reach the markets in the established times to avoid their early decomposition. Subsequently, and in the words of the same author, well-defined logistics must not only occur by direct means (transport, storage, et cetera), but also indirect (design of products or packaging, selection of suppliers, et cetera). On the above, it's inferred that logistics plays a convenient role with respect to the conditions that arise at the time of the distribution chain, storage and subsequent consumption, where the intervening factors are the perspectives of the advantages they can offer based on cost

benefit of those involved, suppliers, marketers, transporters and intermediate and final consumers.

Paraphrasing Panaggio (2016), collaborative logistics is born when two or more independent companies cooperate for and work together to improve the supply chain, regarding speed, quality, costs and flexibility, allowing themselves to have competitive and comparative advantages, the idea is to cooperate in events to achieve goals that separately would not be able to obtain with respect to costs and agility. This implies that a cooperative work is created with both parties to benefit from each other in some common objective, promoting efforts to meet, improve or satisfy the goals proposed by both. Cooperation in any aspect and especially in logistics issues, is defined as establishing temporary or permanent agreements between two or more people, with the purpose of jointly enhancing their project and carrying out activities of goods or services, with economic and social benefit between the parties, achieving cooperation in a clear and organized manner as maintain Brandenburger & Nalebuff (1996).

For the purposes mentioned above, to be effective, it's necessary to promote greater efficiency and productivity, generate increased competitive capacity and access to new markets, adapting the own mode of operation to the common objectives of the interested parties, the idea is to establish solid links where trust, ethical values and adequate profitability of companies or enterprises that are part of the socio-economic environment prevail to offer the products and services on time and under relatively low cost conditions.

Other aspects to consider for successful associative ventures

When you have the idea and business opportunity, you must understand that it originates with the image of a good or service that requires satisfying a certain group of citizens, therefore it's a problem to be solved to cover these needs, therefore it's an opportunity to generate ideas and mobilize various resources for the use of the people who live in that community (Vidal, Sánchez Zinny, Siciliano, Schiuma, & Latini, 2019) in this way we can carry out our business properly and that is sustainable over time. Then we could say that every business idea must be analyzed in its global context and know if it's appropriate or not to put it into practice, so we will avoid risks for possible losses.

Planning is considered as a management instrument, with which projects with a vision for the future are generated, which we must propose and plan in accordance with the analyses that are created of the possible scenarios and that these can be fulfilled correctly (Vidal, et al., 2019) in time, form and place established between the parties involved.

It's required to **determine your horizon or goal to achieve**. Pre-planning is a very important step to make a project a reality. It's not enough just to have a business plan, but you must complement them with a roadmap and processes, chain the steps to achieve the planned. In this sense, you will complement this activity with successful actions to follow the path traced, achieving the success required in any business (Berenstein, 2017), therefore focus on a single challenge and challenge to strengthen your goal. From the perspective of Thi Kim Chung & Mehtha (2016), actions within the company must be planned, allowing you to make quality and appropriate decisions, in addition to generating a good control environment, for the sustainability of business, company or organization.

Changes in the environment should be constantly and periodically predicted, as argues Thi Kim Chung & Mehtha (2016), no business works in isolation, because the environment is the market and businesses work for it, it must therefore be ensured that the objectives, goals and planned improvements are feasible, permanently observing the external factors of past periods and the probabilities of occurrences of events in the market environment. It's therefore implicit that a forecast must be made of the changes outside the business, the market at the local and regional level, and what effects can originate the venture. Therefore, it follows that the forecast allows the entrepreneur or entrepreneur to predict events to anticipate and generate the respective plans to deal with events such as changes in customer demand and these suppliers, the level and quantity of the competitor, new alternative products, economic expansion or recession, new regulations and type of policy in a government of the day, and the expected finances (Empretec, 2020).

Two key points of business success: From the perspective of Lalama (2021), it's necessary to consider examples of successful companies and follow them to empower and be guided with those ideas in the management and successful performance, which have proven in the long term to be those that sustain their success, without forgetting that the services-goods must be referents of the company for their quality, therefore its mission is to apply the two principles as it's describe:

1. Priority of quality before price (better before cheaper);
2. Priority to increase revenue before cost reduction (revenue before cost).

For its part Lalama (2021), also proposes that you should always have reserves to face the eventualities and contingencies of business, an example is the pandemic with Covid-19 that surprised many businesses without their contingent plan, much less reserves, there are still businesses that, to this day, see no way out to deal with the aftermath of SARS-CoV-2 (Díaz-Castrillón & Toro-Montoya, 2020), as a post-pandemic effect. In relation to the proposal, it's discerned that when the corporate values of organizations (whether small, medium or large companies) are adequately defined, they must necessarily apply the two principles cited to

maintain their sustainability that leads to having a successful business in the long term. For the above in the agribusiness issues, they will necessarily establish marketing chains, but they will also provide added value to primary products, generate new possible products through associativity, since there is no better way than democratic, ethical and fair associativity, to improve living conditions with social equity.

Results

As a consequence of the activities carried out and described in the section of the methodology, and that were executed during the research process, the following results were obtained, which are presented below in the form of tables designed for the purpose of interpreting and explaining the concepts contained therein as described.

Table 1 presents the contributions of this work, from the scope of each perspective analyzed in this study.

Chart 1.

Perspectives and challenges of Associative Alternative Economies (*Economías Alternativas Asociativas*)

Number	Descriptor	Factor	Analysis
Perspective of Associativity - Mutual Cooperation			
1	Role	Advantages	It's evident the leading role of associativity, cooperativism or whatever you want to call it, have played an important role throughout the history of humanity as and so much work collaboratively, faith organized form and with a goal that benefits all.
2	Management	Disadvantage	It's notorious the little capacity of some ventures to sustain business, hence the reasons, so it's essential to generate clear and precise ideas so that they contribute to the management of entrepreneurship, the necessary training on leadership and management will overcome this gap.
Challenges and Partnership of Commitment for Social Capital Development (<i>Asociación para el Desarrollo de Capital Social</i>)			
3	Importance	Visibility	Making visible the importance of associativity in Popular and Solidarity Economies, betting on sustainable rural development, with sustainable circular economies, is one of the greatest challenges.
4	Changing scenarios	Competence	In changing scenarios it's necessary that entrepreneurs understand that the ways of doing business are diverse and complex, competence is necessary to be able to compete in a capitalist market with greater resources.
5	Capacidad innovadora	Sustainable model	business For the sustainability of enterprises, it's necessary to apply tools such as planning, creativity, proactivity, response to changes in the environment by applying forecasting and reserves and contingents, as well as the application of the quality of their products, to make them a leader within their site and radius of action, added to the application of circular economies that contribute to the green economy.

6	Leadership and governance	Transformational leadership behaviors	Maintaining adequate leadership for sustainability, stability requires good governance, but, above all, understanding that only in an empathetic, equitable way, preaching and applying impartial justice in conflict resolutions to contribute to issues of inequalities and social gaps will generate trust within associative businesses, therefore, sustainability will be its result.
Challenges, proposals and commitments of economic competitiveness			
7	Strategic direction	Equity, empathy, new approaches	The key factors for sustainable business, which allow to compete in a free market economy, must be applied efficiently, adequately and in a timely manner, in an environment where collaborative work prevails and that its associates feel that they are not displaced, by preferences, friendships or commitments between some members.
8	Proposal	Unity and Solidarity	The idea itself is to stay united, with the objective of the common good in any type of alternative economy they undertake. ODS 8.
9	Challenges	Public-private partnerships with the Academy	It's therefore necessary to link with the academy, at all levels, especially with the university, then, from the programs of linkage with society and with pre-professional practices as part of its University Social Responsibility (<i>Responsabilidad Social Universitaria - RSU</i>).
10	Commitment	The Academy co-leads EPS ventures	The university must lead its relationship with society by creating where there is no Department of University Social Responsibility. Promoting spaces to strengthen associative enterprises, with schools of: business, leadership, incubation of ideas, pointing towards the rural sector, with agribusiness, circular economy, trade and fair price, capable of generating the green economy so necessary in the face of inequality and climate change gaps.

Chart 2 considers the appropriate relationship to establish Alternative Associative Economies (EPS) with Sustainable Development Goal (ODS 8).

Chart 2.

Applications and concordances between ODS 8 - Popular and Solidarity Economy for sustainability

ODS 8	Purposes	EPS
Recognizes that the promotion of decent work is an important driver of inclusive growth, responsive to the environment and traditional market economies.	It promotes the creation of decent jobs and entrepreneurship, encourages the formalization and growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.	Economic model with a global vision of socioeconomic transformation, is a way to combat poverty, inequality and the lack of respect for the environment.
	Achieve inclusive, productive full employment and decent work for women men, youth and persons with disabilities, equal living wages in proportion to work.	
	Decrease economic growth in the face of environmental degradation, circular economy and green economy.	
	Maintain economic growth <i>per capita</i> and reach the target of at least 7% (year) in less developed countries.	

Conclusions

The objective of the research was to analyze the elements present in alternative economies and how they can help the growth and sustainability of popular and solidarity economies, from this point of view, these economies seek a balance between the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the food chain, therefore, aims to be more equitable, just and supportive, they aim at the common good for a good life of all citizens.

Agribusiness and enterprises related to agriculture and ecology, must be strengthened by sectional governments, so it's very essential that people associate in order to be stronger and united, remembering that in times of pandemic the economy could be sustained thanks to agriculture and fishing that were the heroes in food issues. It's emphasized then that no EPS business can be sustainable if not, mutual trust, good governance, collaborative work, but above all have the decisive support of the entire community.

It's fully confirmed that cooperativism has always sought social transformation through collaborative and participatory work, by improving the quality of life to develop at a personal and work level to promote competitiveness and productivity for the well-being of those who are participating in it. Therefore, associative enterprises are and will be the alternative economies that can act against the traditional market economy (capitalist) and reduce the gaps of socio-economic, cultural and educational inequalities.

There is no doubt that constant innovation becomes a key element for sustainable EPS, which must start from the application of creative ideas. In this way, innovative solutions allow inclusive economic growth and social advancement, a paradigm shift and an exit to the *status quo* or comfort zone. Under this approach, alternative economies in association may be able to solve productivity problems that cannot be achieved separately.

It's necessary to follow expert advice for the sustainability of enterprises, establishing the right leadership, thinking creatively to solve present and future events, efficiently manage the risks associated and derived from each activity inside and outside the business. In addition to the generation of trust, solidarity, empathy, being inclusive in decision-making, in addition to promoting a circular economy as part of social responsibility.

Undoubtedly, the sectors of farmers, ranchers and fisheries, are the axes of the productive sector that generate value to the productive chain, however, agriculture, rural sectors have been forgotten by the governments of the day, which are little or nothing interested in strengthening this sector, they stop visualizing the broad horizon, dimensions and strength it has, for this reason associativity must aim or seek in an organized way to generate public policy

proposals to improve current conditions, at the same time that associative-cooperative-community entrepreneurship is generated, so that the products they harvest are marketed, selling at fair prices among them, avoiding as much as possible intermediation, it's one of the mechanisms that will bring an extra benefit to the economy of the sector, where the academy co-leads these spaces providing an education for alternative economies. From this perspective, the rural sector will be strengthened, aiming towards a circular economy within the Ecuadorian environment, we will also contribute to the mitigation of climate change.

Based on the above, the challenge of the course leaders must be focused on the optimal use of resources so that the most disadvantaged sectors have the same opportunities for healthy, educational, productive and work lives, only in this way can poverty reduction, livelihoods and decent employment be achieved and have a more equitable society (Zaar, 2020, p. 7). It's notorious to note how foreign investment is supported more than the national rural sector, it's inadmissible that it's the buyers of foreign raw materials, and not those who own and cultivate the land, generate the products and raw materials who have the privilege for the creation of factories of chifles, chocolates, citrus, among others. It's evident that there is no adoption of public policies to encourage the Ecuadorian producer with preferential credits, which strengthen the agricultural, livestock and livestock sector, denoting the absence of plans and mechanisms capable of promoting support, to change from an exporter of raw materials to an exporter of quality final products.

It's ratified that the above lines are the necessary conditions that originate the various types of competent changes to help the community to live equitably in terms of health, work and production, for this it's necessary to understand inequalities, to balance disparities with coordinated and binding associative work, these are the key factors for sustainable ventures, not only for Ecuador but for the world.

It's imperative that governments, public and private organizations adhere to the ODS, to create necessary conditions in the changes to support society to live equitably, understanding not only inequalities, but to equalize disparities with coordinated and associative work, as key factors to generate socioeconomic sustainability. Based on what is described in the information, descriptive and quantitative studies can be carried out.

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