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**Developing a model for mainstreaming the incubation of technology-based
social impact-driven enterprises**

*Plenary Session 3
"The future: realistic dreams"*

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Context: Impact Investing, Incubation and Acceleration in Brazil

Brazil has 200 million citizens and is the 9th largest economy in the world (World Bank, 2015). The social sector has seen significant growth after the end of the military dictatorship in 1985, and access to basic public health and education services has greatly improved since the economic stabilization of the 1990s. But inequality is still acute (we rank 80th in social inequality), philanthropy is limited (91st in the World Giving Index) and average income is low: 66% of families have a monthly income of less than R\$2,034 (US\$833).

Historically it has fallen to governments, civil society organizations and philanthropy – in Brazil and around the world - to tackle these social problems. These approaches have however proven insufficient in solving the world's problems at the required scale.

In this context, a way of attracting capital for investment in organizations and businesses that can create social impact whilst offering financial returns has emerged. Impact businesses are enterprises that offer innovative and scalable solutions to social problems affecting the low-income population. Such businesses offer products or services that provide market solutions to a wide range of problems.

Inspired by the experiences of the UK, U.S., Canada and other G7 countries, Brazilian organizations working in the field of social entrepreneurship and impact investment founded the Brazilian Social Finance Task Force (SFTF) in 2014. The Task Force is a movement that maps, connects and supports organizations and strategic agendas to strengthen investments and enterprises that combine social and/or environmental impact with financial returns. In October 2015 it published a set of recommendations¹¹¹ to advance the social finance and impact business agenda, identifying four levers that need to be moved until 2020 so that the field grows and strengthens in Brazil:

- Increasing the supply of capital: this involves identifying those players with potential to make the most meaningful contributions in the short term, inviting new participants to donate or invest, and making both new and existing financial mechanisms more robust to allow these capital flows.
- Building stronger intermediary organizations: expanding the number, technical capability and geographic reach of intermediary organizations - such as business incubators and accelerators, universities, organizations focused on impact measurement and evaluation – will lead to stronger strategic agendas for the field.
- Increasing the number and quality of scalable impact businesses: more impact businesses will lead to a wider range of business models being tested and to more success stories with proven, measured impact and financial results.
- Promoting a legal and regulatory environment favorable to social finance: to promote the social finance agenda beyond current actors, seeking allies dedicated to building an environment with lower risks and more dynamism for the field. This will involve mapping key public and private sector leaders to be familiarized with the field in order to mobilize funding for social-environmental impact and potentially to propose regulations and norms to facilitate the development of this ecosystem.

¹¹¹ Brazilian Social Finance Taskforce (2015) *Social Finance in Brazil - Solutions to Social and Environmental Challenges: A new paradigm for managing the needs and resources of society*, available at http://socialimpactinvestment.org/reports/Recommendations_Brazilian%20Social%20Finance%20Task%20Force.pdf

In 2015 the Brazilian Social Finance Task Force in partnership with 20 organizations outlined four principles¹¹² that differentiate Impact Businesses from nonprofits and other businesses, regardless of legal structure:

- they have an explicit purpose in their mission to create positive social-environmental impact;
- they recognize, measure and evaluate their impact periodically;
- they operate on an economic basis, which means they generate revenues;
- their governance considers the interests of investors, clients and the community.

Impact businesses can take different legal forms: nonprofits, cooperatives or private for-profit companies. Investment made in this type of hybrid business, which creates social impact and financial performance, has become known as impact investment, or more recently, social impact investing. When making decisions on where to allocate capital, this new way of investing considers not only risk-adjusted returns, but also the potential social impact that these enterprises can produce.

The table below shows a spectrum of investment opportunities, ranging in focus from financial-only to impact-only, and explains how impact investing differs from other types of investment, especially socially responsible and sustainable investment.

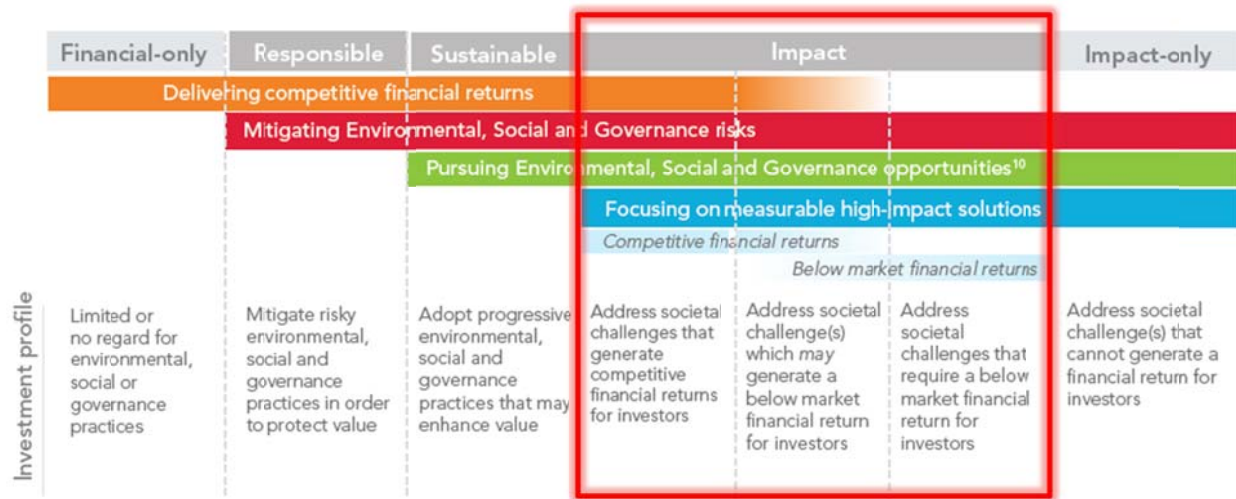


Figure 1: A spectrum of capital allocation (highlighted section selected by the authors)¹¹³

A recent study¹¹⁴ published by ANDE – the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs – mapped 29 impact investors operating in Brazil, with a combined total of US\$186 million in assets under management. Together these investors made 48 investments in 2014 and 2015, with a total value of US\$70 million. The most common sectors receiving investment were health, education and financial inclusion.

¹¹² Brazilian Social Finance Task Force (2015) *Carta de Princípios para Negócios de Impacto no Brasil*, available at http://forcatarefafinancassociais.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Carta_Principios.pdf

¹¹³ Social Impact Investment Task Force (2014) *Allocating for Impact - Subject paper of the asset allocation working group*, available at <http://www.socialimpactinvestment.org/reports/Asset%20Allocation%20WG%20paper%20FINAL.pdf>

¹¹⁴ ANDE (2016) *The Impact Investing Landscape in Latin America - Trends 2014 & 2015*, available at http://c.y.mcdn.com/sites/www.andeglobal.org/resource/resmgr/docs/LatAm_Implnv_Report_English_.pdf

The study shows that 50% of participating investors expected net annual returns of 16% or more in 2016. Equity was the most frequently offered instrument (67% of investors), followed by debt (52%), convertible debt (41%) and other investment types (22%).

A recent mapping exercise¹¹⁵ carried out by PIPE SOCIAL revealed some interesting trends around the profile of impact businesses. This project mapped 579 such businesses (not exhaustive) using the same four criteria introduced above. It is interesting to note that:

- 40% of businesses in the sample have been operating for less than one year
- 70% have already been formalized as legal entities
- The majority (63%) have their headquarters in the Southeast region, the richest of Brazil
- The most frequently cited sectors were education (38%), green technologies (23%), citizenship (12%) and health (11%)
- 35% are not yet revenue-generating, 30% earn up to 30,000 USD¹¹⁶ annually, and 7% more than 2.1 million USD
- 42% are yet to receive any kind of investment, while 25% received capital from their respective entrepreneurs or friends and family members, 11% from incubators and accelerators, 9% from angel investors and 8% from government
- 79% of businesses in the study are currently looking for investment. Of these, 38% are looking to raise up to 65,000 USD, 33% between 65,000 and 315,000 USD, and 23% more than 315,000 USD. 6% did not know or did not provide information.
- The impact businesses surveyed had varying degrees of adherence to the four principles put forward by the Social Finance Taskforce:
 - 60% clearly state their commitment to generating social or environmental impact
 - 42% monitor their social or environmental results in some way
 - 46% do not depend on subsidies from philanthropic capital
 - 42% consult the community in their decision-making processes, although it does not participate directly.

Despite being relatively new, the field has seen substantial recent growth both in Brazil and internationally. It is still far from being mainstream, and most organizations working with entrepreneurship more broadly are not familiar with concepts such as social entrepreneurship, impact business and social finance.

Promoting Impact Business in the portfolio of technology-based accelerators and incubators

For the Brazilian impact business field to grow and strengthen, it needs to create dialog with other relevant strategic fields. It is important to understand the possible intersections, influences and learning, so that resources can be directed to monitoring, approaching and connecting to these other agendas. To this end, one of the problems we need to address is how to move social and environmental impact higher up on the agenda of organizations focused on promoting mainstream and technology-based entrepreneurship. Brazil has a solid network of incubators and accelerators all over the country, meaning there is huge potential to reach scale quickly. A study¹¹⁷ carried out by Anprotec (Brazilian Association of Science Parks and Business Incubators) shows that there are currently 369 incubators operating in Brazil,

¹¹⁵ Pipe-Social (in press) *Mapa dos Negócios de Impacto no Brasil*

¹¹⁶ All USD figures approximate

¹¹⁷ Anprotec, Sebrae, FGV Projetos (2016) *Estudo de Impacto Econômico – Segmento de Incubadoras de Empresas no Brasil*,

with resident and graduated businesses together creating approximately 53,000 jobs and earning revenue of around 5 billion USD annually. Another study¹¹⁸, by the FGV University (2016), found that there are around 40 accelerators in Brazil. In general they are younger organizations, with an average age of 3.5 years, but together have already accelerated more than 1,100 businesses. Incubators and accelerators in Brazil contribute to the promotion of entrepreneurship, and to economic and technological development.

Two international experiences show the important place that accelerators and incubators are taking in global efforts to promote impact business. The Social Incubator Fund¹¹⁹, an initiative of the UK Government's Office for Civil Society, was launched in 2012 with the dual aims of supporting existing social incubators and accelerators and bringing new players to the market.

In two investment rounds, the project has supported ten organizations to insert the topic of impact business into their portfolios. Another interesting initiative, led by the Rockefeller Foundation¹²⁰, has selected five accelerators globally and is supporting them to insert impact business into their agendas.

It is important to consider that many of the impact businesses that have become showcases for the sector have at the center of their business model innovations in the way they deliver otherwise ubiquitous products and services to populations that did not previously have easy access to them, mostly at the base of the economic pyramid. As relevant as these business model innovations may be in addressing some of society's needs, technological innovation must also be incentivized and directed at solving some of the most difficult problems that we face, such as climate change, inequality, gender and extreme poverty in its multiple dimensions.

The project that will be detailed below is a practical experience that seeks to include the topic of impact business in the Brazilian entrepreneurship ecosystem, specifically among incubators, accelerators and technology parks. The results achieved and learning obtained from this experience can offer useful insights and reflections for those in the entrepreneurship ecosystem that aim to bring impact business into their agenda, and/or the agendas of their partners and networks.

The Incubation and Acceleration for Impact Program

This program arose from the partnership between three institutions - the Institute for Corporate Citizenship (ICE), the Brazilian Association of Science Parks and Business Incubators (Anprotec) and the Support Service for Micro and Small Entrepreneurs (Sebrae) – and from the complementary nature of their respective work and approaches.

ICE focuses its efforts on mobilizing different players to raise more capital for social impact. Being essentially an organization that facilitates connections, ICE has promoted the impact business agenda to diverse players, especially those providing capital. From 2012 to 2014 it focused on strengthening accelerators that were already working with impact business. These organizations were – and still are to

available at http://www.anprotec.org.br/Relata/18072016%20Estudo_ANPROTEC_v6.pdf

¹¹⁸ Abreu, P.R.M., Campos, N.M. (2016) *O Panorama das Aceleradoras de Startups no Brasil*, available at http://www.imcgrupo.com/impress/gt/upload/O_Panaroma_das_Aceleradora_de_Startups_no_Brasil.pdf

¹¹⁹ Big Lottery Fund UK (2017) *Social Incubator Fund*, available at <https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/socialincubatorfund> accessed on April 28, 2017

¹²⁰ Monitor Deloitte (2015) *Accelerating Impact: Exploring best practices, challenges and innovation in impact enterprise acceleration*, available at <https://assets.rockefellerfoundation.org/app/uploads/20150201214323/Accelerating-Impact.pdf>

this day – doing excellent work. However, since they were relatively few in number, their collective capacity for acceleration was restricted to a relatively small number of businesses per year. Anprotec has accumulated more than 30 years of experience in strengthening organizations that encourage innovative entrepreneurship in Brazil, developing a profound understanding of the opportunities and challenges of working with this stakeholder group. Today it has more than 350 member organizations, and has great potential for convening incubators and accelerators in Brazil and for influencing their agendas.

SEBRAE is today Brazil's primary player in strengthening small businesses, and has vast experience in supporting entrepreneurs, particularly those of inclusive businesses.

The three organizations have thus been developing the Incubation and Acceleration for Impact Program since October 2015, with the aim of incorporating the social impact agenda into the strategies of technology-focused incubators and accelerators. The program's core value proposition for the entrepreneurship ecosystem is two-fold. For startups and their entrepreneurs, it creates an opportunity to align technology-based entrepreneurial activity with individual purpose and the creation of social good. For intermediary organizations, namely incubators and accelerators, the program creates an opportunity for differentiation, potentially opening up new streams of funding from government, philanthropists and development finance institutions, as well as new sources of investment for their portfolio companies.

The **Incubation and Acceleration for Impact Program** has three main phases: capacity development, an Action Plan competition and continued support to all participants who conclude the capacity development phase. From December 2015 to April 2016, 30 incubators and accelerators participated in capacity development activities, including an in-person training meeting, a 5-hour online training course on social entrepreneurship, and webinars with industry experts and leading practitioners. Twenty organizations successfully completed these activities and were invited to submit an action plan for incorporating social and environmental impact into their strategy and portfolio. To assist them in building this plan they were offered mentorship with consultants experienced in social entrepreneurship and business incubation and acceleration processes.

The ten incubators and accelerators judged to have submitted the best action plans were invited to participate in the Brazilian Forum on Social Finance and Impact Business, in August 2016. Nine of the 10 finalists are based in universities or science parks. They also participated in a one-day workshop to hone their skills on working with impact businesses, met impact investment funds and networked with incubators and accelerators already focused on impact business. They had the chance to pitch their strategies to a panel of experts, who selected five winners that were announced during the Forum. The winners were each awarded a cash prize of 8,000 USD (approx.), and ongoing support from ICE for a minimum of six months as they begin implementing their action plans. Additionally, the impact businesses supported by these winners will have access to support services from Sebrae and mentorship from ICE members, all of whom are successful entrepreneurs and businesspeople.

A second round of the program was launched in October 2016 and will run until December 2017. In this round there are 29 organizations participating, from 17 states across Brazil. The capacity building program has been upgraded, building on learning from the first round. It is currently comprised of a 12 hour in-person workshop, an 8-module online course that presents relevant content in video, text and interactive formats, and seven hours of mentorship with a specialist consultant to assist each incubator or accelerator in the final polishing of their action plan.

STAGES OF THE PROGRAM



Figure 2: Stages of the Incubation & Acceleration for Impact Program

We believe that this program has the potential to create transformative change in Brazil, by stimulating the creation of technology-based solutions for solving social problems faced by the low-income population, through business models that are self-sustaining rather than relying on donations for survival. We believe that this movement can influence the entrepreneurship agenda worldwide, and that the organizations of the future will need to be prepared to welcome and support social entrepreneurs.



Our Network of Incubators & Accelerators

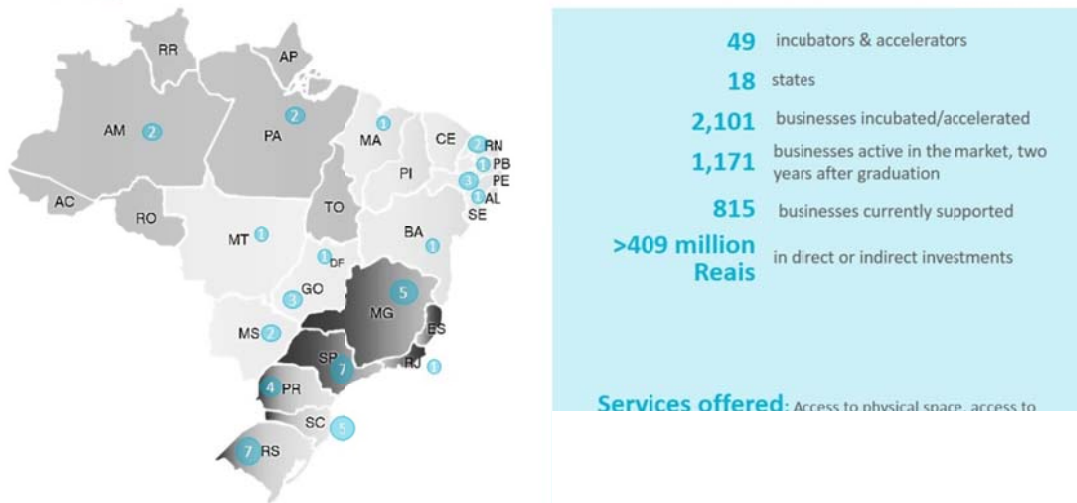


Figure 3: Participants in the :

Program Evaluation

As a way of monitoring progress, we carried out an initial evaluation with the incubators and accelerators that completed the first round of the program. This evaluation is not intended to be exhaustive, given that the program is still ongoing. Its aim is to stimulate initial reflections on results achieved and to present inputs for possible changes.

The specific objectives of the evaluation were therefore: (1) to analyse the results obtained by the incubators and accelerators that finished the capacity building phase; (2) to identify the challenges faced by them in the implementation of their plans; (3) to collect recommendations for the future.

An online questionnaire was sent to the 20 incubators and accelerators that completed the capacity-building phase of the first cohort, and that submitted an action plan detailing how they intended to incorporate or consolidate impact business in their agenda. This questionnaire tackled the following topics:

- About the action plan:
 - To what extent the plan has been implemented
 - Which actions have been realized
 - Challenges encountered
 - What could have been done to minimise these challenges
 - Whether the targets for impact businesses have been met
- About the impact businesses in the portfolio:
 - Quantity, sector and social/environmental problem approached
 - To what extent the presence of these businesses influences the overall portfolio
- About the program
 - In what ways the program has contributed to the organization working with impact business
 - Areas that could be further elaborated

Of the 20 organizations that received the questionnaire, 15 responded. Two out of the four that did not respond (i.e. 10% of the overall group), advised that the primary leadership figure – who had taken part in the capacity building – was no longer with the organization, resulting in the plans not being implemented.

The data presented on implementation of the plan relates to the complete group (20), including those that did not respond. A clear majority (70%) implemented the plan totally or partially, while three organizations (15%) did not implement any of the planned actions, and a further three (15%) did not answer.

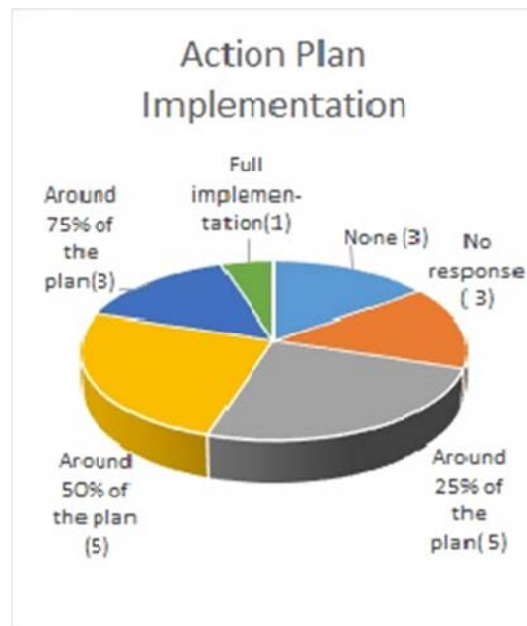


Figure 4: Degree of implementation of the action plan

Of those organizations that implemented the plan totally or partially (14), it is worth pointing out that a majority (10) mentioned actions relating to dissemination of the topic, such as presentations and workshops. While many organizations did not cite the number of people reached, those that did provide numbers reached a total of more than 3,200 people.

Among the other most frequently mentioned actions were adapting selection processes with impact criteria, adapting incubation processes and training additional staff members (each cited by 4 organizations). It is also worth noting that three organizations mentioned setting up new incubators focused exclusively on impact businesses.

Turning to the challenges faced in implementing the plan, lack of structure, resources and team was mentioned as the most important by 11 organizations. Additionally, three institutions stated that they did not have the necessary internal support. Other, more individual challenges were listed by two organizations: change in the political scenario and staff turnover.

Type of action implemented	No. of incubators
Dissemination: presentations and events	10
Inclusion of impact criteria in selection process	4
Staff training	4
Plan to create new institution focused on impact businesses	3
Adapting incubation processes	4
Developing a specific impact business project	2

Table 1: Type of action implemented

As part of the action plan created, each incubator and accelerator included a target for the number of impact businesses that it intended to attract. While 10 institutions stated that they did not meet their respective target, fourteen do have impact businesses currently in their portfolios, and together they are supporting 37 such businesses. It is interesting to note that the majority of these businesses (20) started receiving support after the incubator or accelerator had passed through the program.

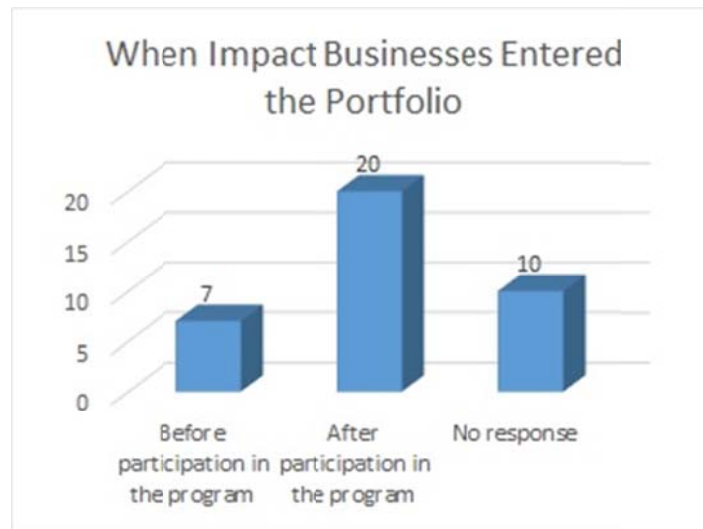


Figure 5: When did you start supporting impact businesses?

It is also interesting to note the diversity of sectors of the impact businesses supported by these incubators and accelerators. Of the 37 businesses cited, detailed information was received for 34, and among those the most common areas were environment (8), health (7), education (5) and renewable energy (4). Topics such as social inclusion (2), housing (2) and food (1) were also mentioned.

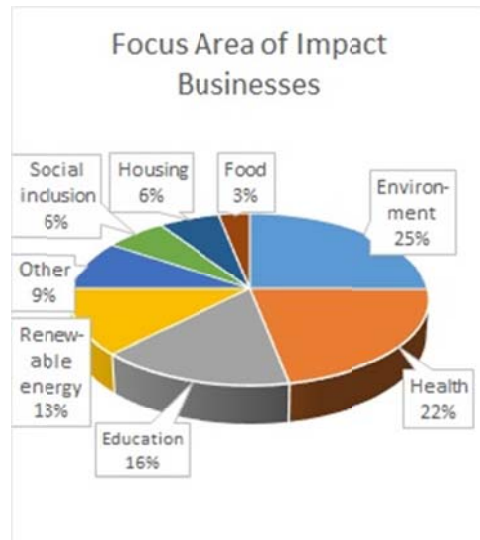


Figure 6: Focus areas of supported impact businesses

For illustration purposes, brief descriptions of some the business supported by the group are presented below, listed by sector.

Sector	Name	Description	Website
Environment	Casa da Minhoca	Production of natural fertilizer that increases agricultural productivity and eliminates consumption of agrottoxins, thereby avoiding sickness and increasing healthy consumption. (Region: center-west; State: Goiás)	http://casadasminhocas.blogspot.com.br/
Health	Treko Protesis	Access to lower-cost prosthetics by way of 3-D printing (Region: southeast; State: São Paulo)	www.treko3d.com/
Education	Heureca Ateliê	Promotes accessibility of classroom learning for children with autism and attention deficit. (Region: Northeast; State: Paraíba)	
Renewable energy	Fotius Energia	Development of affordable solar panels for residential use. (Region: Northeast; State: Pernambuco)	http://fotiusenergia.com.br/
Social Inclusion	Start to Talk	Social inclusion for those with hearing problems, by way of a device that facilitates communication with others. (Region: South; State: Paraná)	https://pt-br.facebook.com/StartToTalk/
Housing	Moradigna	Accessible home improvements for the low-income population. (Region: southeast; State: São Paulo)	http://moradigna.com.br/
Food	Cooplaf - Cooperativa de Leite da Agricultura Familiar com Interação Solidária do Oeste do Paraná	Rural cooperative transforming milk into products for schools, whose main client is the government. Increases income of small-scale family farms. (Region: South; State: Paraná)	

Table 2: Examples of impact businesses supported by program participants

One of the hypotheses for this program was that the presence of impact businesses in incubator and accelerator portfolios that also work with other types of business could in some way influence the portfolio as a whole, creating a “cross-pollination” effect. To test this hypothesis, two questions were asked in the evaluation: (a) if, and how, the presence of impact businesses influences the portfolio as a whole; (b) if this presence stimulates reflections.

For both questions the majority responded in the affirmative (11 for influence, 12 for reflection). When asked in what way this happens, there was a diversity of responses, as shown in the tables below.

In what way does the presence of impact businesses influence portfolio?	
Broadens vision of how businesses can solve social problems	4
Increases social and environmental commitment of the incubator/accelerator and positions it in the field	4
The impact businesses are disseminators of the topic	2
Increases the need for the incubator/accelerator to develop a specific approach for impact businesses	1
No response / Not applicable	4

Table 3: In what way does having impact businesses in the portfolio influence the incubator or accelerator?

What kind of reflections are stimulated?	
Encourages other businesses to think about their potential to create impact	8
Focuses attention on social and environmental issues	2
Stimulates work in partnership	1
Need to adapt processes and procedures of the organization as a whole	1
No response / Not applicable	3

Table 4: What kind of reflection do impact businesses bring to the organization?

Lastly, the incubators and accelerators were asked to what extent the program contributed to them including impact business in their strategy. The vast majority (80% of respondents) stated that it contributed a lot.

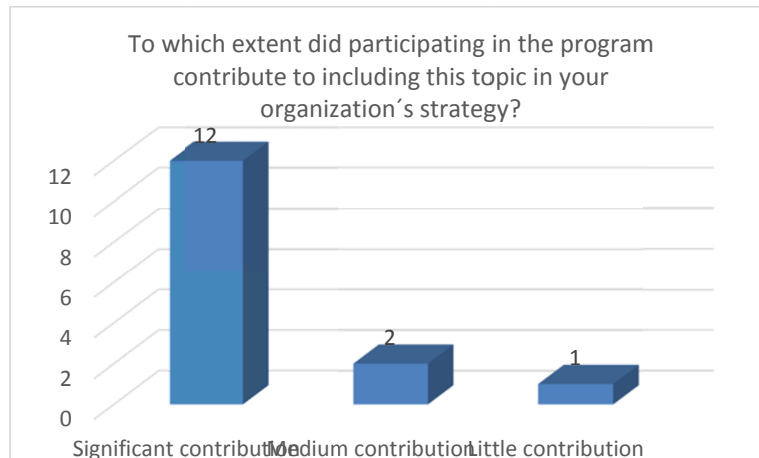


Figure 7: To which extent did participating in the program contribute to including this topic in your organization's strategy?

When asked what topics could be considered more comprehensively in the future, the most commonly cited were impact evaluation metrics and indicators (5), knowledge about the field in general (4) and financial sustainability and fundraising for impact businesses (3).

Lessons learned and recommendations for future projects

This section aims to explore some of the reflections resulting from this practical experience of bringing together the fields of innovative entrepreneurship and impact business, and from the subsequent evaluation. The first sub-section covers recommendations and opportunities emanating directly from the Program and the second touches on trends we have captured in ICE's broader work strengthening the ecosystem for social entrepreneurship.

Program-related recommendations and opportunities

Firstly, the rapid interest and adherence of significant players in the innovative entrepreneurship space, such as SEBRAE, Anprotec and many incubators and accelerators, shows the relevance of this topic, and suggests that there is an opportunity for it to gain traction nationally.

One opportunity is that the incubation environment would appear to be conducive to sharing experiences and knowledge. To this end there does seem to be a process of cross-pollination of ideas, in which technology-based businesses are influenced by impact businesses. This environment for peer-to-peer learning is a win-win and should be developed further, as a way to strengthen all players involved and lead to a more mature understanding around business models and social/environmental impact.

Several challenges have also appeared for incubators and accelerators in supporting this movement. The first challenge relates to the difficulties of financial sustainability and lack of infrastructure that often affects these organizations. Incubators and accelerators in Brazil and around the world battle every day to find a business model that secures the resources necessary for them to operate efficiently and effectively, and to play a strategic role in their respective regions. The capacity of these organizations to absorb a new topic and design a new strategic front directly relates to this institutional capacity, which is often very limited.

This leads us to reflect on how this program can make a difference in the financial sustainability of participants. One possibility would be to map and communicate different revenue-models used globally, so that organizations in Brazil may rethink their own models. Another possibility that could be reinforced is emphasizing the strategic importance of accelerators and incubators in promoting impact businesses. The more that these organizations are visible in the impact business ecosystem, the higher the chance that they can access new sources of funding.

Another challenge is in assessing the progress of incubated impact businesses in moving towards their social goals. This issue is shared by other organizations in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem, as discussed in the next section, but is especially acute for incubators and accelerators who are expected to assist social-impact driven start-ups with this. One possibility in this regard is to encourage the adoption of existing metrics that can help these businesses to reflect on their impact, even if they do not have the complexity and precision necessary for thorough impact evaluation. For example, we could think about a partnership with B-Lab to use its “B Impact Assessment Tool”, which despite not being focused on impact businesses is designed to help any business to be a “better business for the world”.

Ecosystem-wide trends for incubators and accelerators

Diverse movements are taking place in Brazil and around the world, questioning the way we currently do business, and seeking out ways to align meaning with profit. In Brazil, there is not only the Social Finance Task Force, but also movements such as Conscious Capitalism, New Economy and B-Corps, among others. This process is just beginning and presents huge potential.

It represents a paradigm shift, changing both the way business is done and the way it measures its success. The incorporation of social and environmental impact in the nerve center of the business offers benefits not only for the entrepreneur - who has the opportunity to align work with purpose – but especially for the world, which is able to see a range of innovation springing up to solve major global issues, particularly those facing the most vulnerable groups in society.

We also see a range of opportunities in terms of the role that accelerators and incubators can play in advancing the movement, given their experience, legitimacy and reach. The first of these relates to potential for disseminating the topic locally through presentations and workshops, as we have already seen with participants in our program who have brought the concept of impact business to 3,200 people.

The work that these organizations do to promote the topic is becoming gradually stronger, and a new generation of entrepreneurs motivated by purpose is forming. This emerging motivation can be seen in the 37 impact businesses being incubated by participating organizations, a significant number that we consider to be only partially – if at all - due to the program. Incubators, especially those linked to universities, can also play a crucial role in developing talent for the field. Disseminating the cause of impact business within universities can help to develop a new generation of potential entrepreneurs and professionals with a vision that combines social impact and financial performance.

This is not without its challenges though. One of them is the adoption by impact businesses of impact evaluation metrics. Incubators and accelerators have a crucial role in both encouraging this and in offering practical support in how to do it. In the field of impact business, the debate on what and how to measure occurs frequently, since there is no formula or solution that works for all businesses. Since impact businesses generally work with complex problems, measuring their contribution to solutions is equally complex. Bearing in mind that the majority of such businesses in Brazil are new (less than three years of operations) and still

striving to structure themselves to survive and grow, demanding that they implement complex systems for measuring impact is unfeasible.

For this movement to get stronger, there is still much to be done to attract a greater number of relevant players. Dialog with government is needed to further strengthen the strategic agenda for innovative entrepreneurship, especially that with social and environmental impact. We also need to attract corporations, which are increasingly investing in innovative start-ups that can be plugged into their value chains. It is also important to attract foundations – whether corporate, family-run or independent – whose philanthropic work offers potential to finance the building of the ecosystem, investing in innovative initiatives.

After 2 years working on the connection between the universe of innovative entrepreneurship and the field of impact business, we are certain that there is a great deal to be gained. By using technology to solve social problems, impact businesses can reach greater scale and make a greater contribution to the world. A well prepared network of incubators and accelerators has the potential to drastically increase the number of businesses operating with this logic and improve the quality and depth of their impact.

The Incubation and Acceleration for Impact Program would thus appear not only to be contributing to each participating organization, but influencing the ecosystem as a whole to include social and environmental impact in its agenda.