DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A BUSINESS GAME FOR THE TRAINING OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS IN POOR COMMUNITIES IN BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the Game of Social Entrepreneurship, which is used in the training of entrepreneurs in Brazilian needy communities. The methodology adopted follows the approach of learning through a process in which students act as the main actors of learning. The final result is not the most important one, but the exercise of planning and decision making, which allows participants to learn through a sequential process of decisions and feedback. At the end of the game participants should re-evaluate all decisions and try to tell poor decisions apart of right decisions.

The social entrepreneur is an agent of process transformation in the social sector where the main result of this process is neither a commodity nor a service (as in business) or a regulation (as in government), but a human being transformed. He actually produces a change in circumstances and in human lives.

The social entrepreneur has some specific characteristics like the valuation of human being (cooperation, solidarity, fairness, competence, accountability and economic stringency), the historical and geographical knowledge of the community and of the evolution of mankind (he understands the cultural differences that exist in Brazilian society, which allow him to experience the effects of social exclusion, such as urban violence, child exploitation, marginalization of the elderly, prejudices and drug trafficking), and needs to have managerial ability (values both operational routine and organizational innovation). That is, he is able to reconcile operational part with projects, which constitute the core activity of social institutions, justifying its existence.

The Game of Social Entrepreneurship is an eight week-game, with a three hour-class per week. The subjects covered in the first four classes are Vision and Mission, Principles of Excellence; Costs and Pricing, Revenue and Expenditure, Income Statement, Assets, Liabilities and Balance Accounting. It is during the four last weeks that what we call plays occur, that is, all the recreational activities of purchasing, production, sales, completion of reports. The game ends with two moves and their respective feedbacks. After each move, a comparative analysis of a business session is made during an assembly.

Keywords: business game, social entrepreneurship, Brazilian poor communities
INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a widely discussed theme nowadays, and, at first sight, this field of knowledge translates into an exceptional conceptual diversity (HISRich & Peters, 2004). The word entrepreneur means the one that assumes risks and begins something new. From the concept of entrepreneur we take the concept of social entrepreneur, which, according to Matos (2007), those are the people who have strategic vision, skills and determination, which leads them to search for solutions to social problems within the whole system and not only in its environment; in summary, there will be no social entrepreneurship if no social value is added to the actions of this entrepreneur.

Social entrepreneurs are those who work in the community and are much more worried about helping people than about “earning money”. In many cases, they change people’s lives because they embrace important social issues (Thompson, 2002).

Thus, the social entrepreneur aims at the following:

- Having significant social results
- Promoting changes to improve people’s quality of life
- Guaranteeing and preserving the wealth of human life
- Renewing the reasons to hope for a future with a better and better and socially fair world

To acquire these goals, the entrepreneur must be a person with strategic vision, in the whole system, and have skills and determination that lead him/her to look for solutions to social problems using knowledge that shows exceptional conceptual diversity. The matter of this work investigation lays on the idea of utilizing business games in the formation of the entrepreneur by means of simulating environments that promote social entrepreneurship.

This work aims at presenting a model of application of business games as an instrument of social entrepreneurship. The methodology adopted follows the learning approach on which the students perform, as main actors of the learning process, in a simulated environment of business games. The final result is the exercise of planning and decision making, which allows participants the conditions to learn by means of a sequential process of decisions and feedback of the disproportion between the decisions that are made and the aimed results. At the end of the exercise the participants must re-assess all their decisions and try to know what has happened.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The word entrepreneurship has its origins in the works of Cantillon (Barçante, 2010), a banker of the 18th century, which would be known nowadays, however, as an investor in venture capital. To Filion (1999), the entrepreneur was a businessman who would buy raw material for a certain price and sell it for an uncertain price. In his ideas, if the entrepreneur could have profits that were beyond what was expected, he had innovated, once had done something new and different.
The historical evolution of the meaning of the terms entrepreneur and entrepreneurship, based on Hisrich & Peters (2004) is the following.

The Middle Ages: The participant and the person in charge of the production projects in large scale;

17th century: A person who assumes risks either of profits or losses in a contract of fixed value with the government;

1763: Adam Smith says that the entrepreneur is like the capitalist owner, a capital supplier, while, at the same time, an administrator who puts himself between work and consumer;

1876: Francis Walker distinguished the ones that supplied the fundings and received interests from those who obtained profits with administrative skills;

1934: Joseph Schumpeter defines the entrepreneur as someone that is innovative and develops technology;

1961: The professor and researcher David McClelland defines the entrepreneur as a dynamic person that runs moderate risks;

1964: Peter Drucker argues that the entrepreneur is someone that maximizes opportunities;

1975: Albert Shapero says that the entrepreneur takes initiatives, organizes some social and economic mechanisms and accepts failure risks;

1983: Gifford Pinchot establishes the concept of intra-entrepreneur as an entrepreneur who performs within the organization already established;

1985: Robert Hisrich describes entrepreneurship as a process of creation of something that is worthy and different, dedicating the necessary time and efforts, assuming corresponding financial, psychological and social risks and receiving the consequent rewards of personal and economic satisfaction.

According to Camilotti (2007), what makes an entrepreneur someone different are the peculiar characteristics of his/her personality, besides the fact of having at his/her disposal an enterprise (or future enterprise) to be used to satisfy his/her necessities, as any other instrument. The basic characteristics that are highlighted in an entrepreneur are:

They are visionaries: They have vision of how their lives and businesses will be, that is, they have the ability to implement their dreams;

They know how to reach decisions: They do not feel insecure, they take the right decisions on the right time and implement their actions quickly;

They are individuals that make the difference: They transform what is possible into reality, they add value to services and goods they put on the market;

They know how to exploit maximum of the opportunities. He/she is an expert to identify opportunities. Good ideas, generally, are generated from what everybody can see, but nobody has ever identified something practical to transform it in opportunity, until the entrepreneur appears;
Business Games for Training Social Entrepreneurs

They are determined and dynamic: They implement their actions with such a commitment, running over adversities. They are dynamic and feel uncomfortable facing routine;

They are dedicated: They are exemplar workers, and always find energy to go on, even when they are faced to problems;

They are optimistic and in love with what they do: They love the work they do. It’s this passion that maintains them more lively. Optimism always makes them look for and see success instead of imagining failure;

They are independent and build their own destiny: They want to be ahead of changes, determining their own steps. They open their own paths, search being their bosses themselves and to generate jobs;

They become rich: They believe that success in business has money as the consequence;

They are leaders and team formers: They have strong sense of leadership. They know that to be successful they depend on a team of competent professionals. They recruit the best professionals to advise them in the fields where they do not have the best knowledge;

They have good relationships: They know how to construct a net of contacts that help them with clients, suppliers and class entities;

They are organized: They know how to get and allocate financial, human, material and technological resources, in a rational way;

They plan: They plan every step, from the first draft of the business plan till the final version. They have the strong vision of the businesses they deal with as the base;

They develop self-knowledge: They are thirsty to learn and search for it where it is available;

They assume calculated risks: They know how to assume risks and manage them, evaluating the real chances of success. Assuming risks has something to do with challenges;

They have self-control: They know how to control or redirect impulses and disturbing states of spirit. They do not have the least propensity to judge and they think quickly before they act. They present well-being in ambiguity;

They are creative and innovative: They identify new and productive forms to develop a task and draw processes. They have holistic vision, that is, the global perception of the situation and/or trouble;

They present ethical values: They prosper working interminable hours and managing their enterprises in the more rigid ethical and moral patterns. They believe work must be participative and contribute socially;

They create value to society. They use their intellectual capital so as to create value to society, generating jobs and invigorating economy, always using their creativity and innovation to search for solutions to improve people’s lives.
According to Barçante (1998), between 1970 and the mid-1980s, due to the progress of behavior sciences, behaviorists were interested in studying the area of entrepreneurship, especially David McClelland (1965). He identified three types of basic needs: need for power (N-Pow), need for affiliation (N-Affil) and need for achievement (N-Ach).

The need for power (N-Pow) may manifest itself in two distinct ways in leaders, with emphasis in personal power and in social power, both being characterized as attempts to influence other people and look for influential positions.

The need for affiliation (N-Affil) is observed in a leader when he/she has a friendly form of dealing with people, trying to pay more attention to their feelings. They are always willing to make interpersonal contacts and try to see both sides in any interdepartmental conflict.

The need for achievement (N-Ach) deserves special attention and has been the secondary necessity that is more exhaustively researched. When it becomes strong in someone, it brings about an intense search for the establishment of professional goals that involve risks in pursuing these goals, assessing its performance and waiting acknowledgment for the acquired success.

From then on, McClelland developed the motivation training for realization, whose objective was the improvement of this characteristic in the participants and turning it applicable in enterprise situations, what, up to the end of the 70s of the 20th century, was applied to more than 40 countries. McClelland’s original concept presented positive results in the creation and enlargement of businesses, but suffered some criticisms for being too much centered in occidental thought.

The definite configuration of the method and its official launching occurred in Argentina, 1988. It received the name Empretec. This name arose due to the fact that it was directed to businesses that had technological base (BARÇANTE, 1998).

In Brazil, Empretec was implanted in 1990 and SEBRAE (A Brazilian government department) came to be the executive entity in national level. Empetec is based on the fact that enterprise success does not depend only on entrepreneur skills for business management or favorable conditions that are established by government policies, facing the economic growth in an environment of free market. There are personal behavior patterns and characteristics, such as initiative and persistence that mark the well-successful entrepreneurs.

Social Entrepreneurship

According to Matos (2007), at first, social entrepreneurs felt insecure and resisted the idea of include business logics in their projects, for fearing that their values and principles might be compromised. However, the divulging of successful cases came to be an “objective evidence” that today it is possible to develop and implant businesses that promote the inclusion and the social development, based on cooperation, justice and respect to diversity.
The social entrepreneur is an agent of transformation of the process in the social sector where the main result of this process is neither a commodity nor a service (as in business), nor it is a rule (as in government), but a transformed human being. They really produce a change in circumstances and in human lives.

This is a differing characteristic of the social entrepreneurs. They do not engage in charity, but in transformation (HESSELBEIN; GOLDSMITH; BECKHARD; SCHUBERT, 1998).

To Brinckerhoff (2000), social entrepreneurs must:

- Be willing to run reasonable risks in favor of people the organization serves;
- Understand the difference between need and want;
- Understand that all the allocated resources are actually administered investments;
- Weigh the social and financial return of each of the investments;
- Always have a mission, but know that, without money, there is no mission to be concluded.


The private social entrepreneur has advantages in the aspects of planning, profits and innovation – three goals that he is often used to dealing with. The public social entrepreneur, on the other hand, is derived, in the majority, from economic applications of businesses and models of market for the public sphere.

The social entrepreneur of the 3rd sector takes part in organizations founded by community initiatives. Passion is his springboard, and he counts on the perspicacity and initiative of the people that adjust their ideas to the entrepreneur. Social institutions allow that the energies arisen form the three sectors may add to fight economic and social problems of the community.

The social entrepreneur has some specific characteristics.

- He values the human being: He defends cooperation, sympathy, equity, competence, responsibility and economic rigor;
- He has historical and geographical knowledge and also the knowledge of humanity evolution: He understands the cultural differences that exist in Brazilian society, which allow him to face the effects of social exclusion, such as urban violence, child exploitation, elderly marginalization, prejudice and drug traffic;
- He has management skill: he values both operational and innovative routine. He can conciliate the operational part with the projects, which constitute the leading activity of the social institutions, justifying his existence.
BUSINESS GAMES

Similarly to what happens with flight simulations used in the training of professional pilots, Business Games provide advantages and protections, which makes them highly attractive to participants.

According to Barçante & Castro Pinto (2007), some of the advantages of the use of business games are:

- Creativity stimulus;
- Change adaptation;
- Systematizing of information gathering;
- Developing of new skills;
- Communication exercise;
- Experience exchange;
- New roles experience;
- Enterprise vision;
- Decision-making in risk environment;
- Protection against real damages;
- Instructive entertainment.

Besides the already cited advantages, a business game, according to Elgood (1993);

- It provides to the teams the use of a pattern resource of support to the planning and decision-making, with a friendly interface that dispenses the use and the knowledge of electronic record cards for this specific end;

- It makes the process of decision-making more proactive, giving the teams more time to concentrate efforts in the identification of strong and weak points, opportunities and threats, and also in the analysis of the inner and outer environment of the enterprise, among others;

- It is constituted by an excellent data basis, stocking all the history of the teams’ planning, preserving the integrity of the data of each period (acquired and planned), generating data for analysis in specialized systems, making it possible the interpretation and the evaluation of the process of users’ learning;

- It can be utilizes both as a support tool to decision and also as an evaluation instrument of specific planning skills, having in mind that the user himself – student – is the one who defines his goals and objectives.
Brazilian Business Game Classification

Numberless and different classifications have been made by those who study Business Games. Table 1 presents the classifications of the games according to some criteria, based on LaCruz (2004) and Barçante & Castro Pinto (2007).

Table 1: Brazilian business games classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Classification criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tanabe (1977)</td>
<td>As for means of checking results</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computerized: calculation and reports via computer;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As for functional areas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Games of general administration: simulate all functional areas in a total integrated way,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with no detachment;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functional games: focus a specific sector of the company.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tanabe (1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As for interaction among teams</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interactive: the decisions of the company affect the others’ results;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-interactive: the decisions of a company do not affect the others’ results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As for the economy sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industrial; Commercial; Financial; Services.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As for the time to the response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In real time: Via mail; Batch (remote processing).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motomura (1980)</td>
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As for the basic nature of the game

Systemic games: emphasis in the functioning of the system;

Human games: aim at treating problems of human variables present on negotiations;

Mixed games: intervene systemic and human components.

Kopittke (1992)

As for the simulation type

General games: team of oligopolist industrial companies;

Specific games: developed to a real and specific company from the modeling of its activities;

Sector games: simulate companies from a economy sector, like industrial and bank sectors;

Functional games: model privileges a function in a company. Examples: production, finances, etc. This type of game may be oriented for the teaching of a discipline.

Gramigma (1993)

As for the skills involved

Behavior games: towards personal development, focusing behavioral skills;

Processing games: towards management development, focusing technical skills;

Market games: emphasis on technical abilities of market.

Wilhelm (1997)

As for the technology employed

1st Generation games: developed for large system computers;

2nd Generation games: developed with operational systems and simpler program language (PC);

3rd Generation games: have characteristics like interactivity, friendly graph environments, scenery simulations and diagnose systems and problem resolve based on artificial intelligence.

As for the objectives

Edutainment: aim at teaching while entertaining. They take advantage of funny mechanisms to associate leisure with learning;
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Analysis: aim at studying a deal or a definite aspect of the deal.

Vicente (2001)

As for the shape

Classroom games (*pen and paper*); Board games;

Computer games; *e-mail* games; Book-game; Dramatization.

As for the models

Type Zero: statistical models;

Type I: problems that involve few dimensions and are deterministic;

Type II: disturbing models;

Type III: include chaotic systems;

Type IV: include probability models.

GAME MODELING

The Game of Social Entrepreneurship has the duration of eight weeks, one lesson per week with three hours each class. The subjects covered in the first four classes are Vision and Mission; Principles of Excellence; Costs X Cost Pricing; Income X Revenue Expenditure, Income Statement, Assets X Liabilities and Balance Sheet. In the last four weeks occurs what we call plays, that is, all the playful activities of purchasing, production, selling, filling of reports, that is, “the moment of the truth” (ALBRECHT, 1992). The game ends with two plays and their respective *feedbacks*. After each play, a comparative analysis of the deals is done in a plenary assembly.

Teams are generally divided into:

- ✪ Three mines – they obtain, by means of consignment, with government, gem and metal mines (Magical Pins) and sell them to the goldsmiths;
- ✪ Five goldsmiths – they get metals and gems from the mines, produce jewelry and sell it to the jewelry stores;
- ✪ Three jewelry stores – buy the jewelry with the goldsmiths and export it;
- ✪ Government – exercised by the professor;
- ✪ Exporter – exercised by the professor.
The game modeling, in which supply-chain indicate the deals of purchasing and selling that happen among the companies in the Game, that is, between Mines and Goldsmiths, between Goldsmiths and Jewelry Store and between the Jewelry Stores and the Exporter, considering the negotiation and evaluation approaches of the game of an enterprise of exploitation of precious gems and metals mines, emphasizing that the chain supplier-client begins with the Mines and ends with the Exporter. The Figure 1 shows the game modeling.

Figure 1. Under the Diagram

Elka Magical Pins, colorful plastic pins manufactured by Elka, are the input for the exercise, simulating gems and precious metals. they come in five colors and four shapes. The Figure 2 shows the colors.

Figure 2: The five colors of Elka Magical Pins

Pines are also classified by their shape. It is noteworthy that Elka does not manufacture the green half-wheel pin, which, in the game, would be a half-wheel tourmaline. The Figure 3 presents the four shapes of the Magical Pins.

Figure 3: The four shapes of Elka Magical Pins

Besides selling, buying and handling the pins, create jewels, the Mines, the Goldsmiths and the Jewelry stores have start-up capital, pay slip, taxes and fees, store costs, variable costs and board pro-labor. Table 2 shows the values and percentages of each segment.

Table 2: Startup conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPANY</th>
<th>JOINT-</th>
<th>STOCK</th>
<th>SALARY</th>
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</table>

11
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PRO-
LABOR

VARIABLE COSTS

TAXES

Mines
R$ 100.000,00
R$ 8.000,00
1% to 10% of the sales
15% of the sales
10% of the sales
Goldsmiths
R$ 60.000,00
R$ 12.000,00
1% to 10% of the sales
10% of the sales
20% of the sales
Jewelry store
R$ 300.000,00
R$ 60.000,00
1% to 10% of the sales
5% of the sales
2% of the gains

Performance indicators

The performance indicators used are six; 1. best medium price in purchasing; 2. best medium price for selling; 4. added value (2/1) to the product; 3. market share; 5. financial share; 6. ROI (Profitability).
Debriefing

At the beginning of feedback, five groups, in general, are formed, so as to have in each of them students form Mines, Goldsmiths, Jewelries Stores, to whom the following questions are made:

- In the group opinion, which Mine has had the best performance in the play and which are the reasons for the performance?
- In the group opinion, which Goldsmith has had the best performance in the play and which are the reasons for the performance?
- In the group opinion, which Jewelry Store has had the best performance in the play and which are the reasons for the performance?
- Was there any inner conflict that was not solved? If there was, which?
- Was there any outer conflict that was not solved? If there was, which?

When the exercise are proposed, almost always students comment that they had acted as Mines or Jewelry Stores and have no strict opinion about the performance of the Jewelry Stores that are at the beginning or at the end of the supplier-client chain. At this moment the professor states that if in a simulated environment of the classroom they are not able to realize the performance of the companies of the beginning and end of the productive process of de production chain, guess what happens in real life.

After groups answer the questions of the feedback exercise, they write their answers on the board and the professor invites the class to take part in a warm discussion about the perception of the performance of each company. Only after this moment the professor shows the actual results of the play and usually the class perception agrees with game results.

At the end of play 1 feedback, students are placed in other companies and functions; for instance, those who had performed as Mines are now going to perform as Goldsmiths; the ones that were Jewelry Stores with be Mines, in order that all of them have a systemic vision of the market and the process is repeated for play 2.

METHODOLOGY

The Game in this work is classified as computerized, interactive, industrial, in real time, mixed, 2nd Generation game, market game, edutainment, type I and sector game. According to Sauaia (1970) learning and satisfaction are incorporated to business games, that is, business games represent much more than just a playful method that provides nice moments to the students.
At the beginning of the first class the professor divides the class in groups of three students and asks them to make the following activity: they should present a list of three organizations (companies, NGOs, associations, football teams, etc.) that they consider as being successful and the reasons to acquire such success.

Going on, he requests that each group writes their list on the board. It’s amazing the quantity of information they have. Their empiric knowledge about the reasons for the organizational success fills in the board with relevant information and which can be in any company report, like, for instance, socio-environmental responsibility, quality, productivity, investment in HR, marketing, advertisement, innovation, R&D, focus on the client, partnership with suppliers, process management, creativity, strategic alliances and leadership.

After the board has been fulfilled for all the groups, the professor states to the students that his role as a professor has been “reduced”, once his aim was to teach them and they had given him a lesson instead, and they already have sufficient knowledge to administrate their own businesses and earn money. At this time they ask the professor: earn how? And he answers that the game will help them understand “how to earn”. Thus, this is the end of the 1st lesson and the students go out quite motivated, as they know, that is, “they are able to”, but they need to develop skills and attitudes, that is, “to know how to do” and “to want to do”.

In the second class the professor shows an iron bar and a magnet and makes the following question to the students: what is the difference between a magnet and an iron bar? And they answer that the magnet has the capacity to attract while the iron bar does not have this attractive capacity. And he asks again: Why? And they do not know how to answer it. So professor explains that what is peculiar to the magnet is that he has “a management model”, that is, all electrons of the magnet last orbital spin to the same side, making that each tiny magnetic field of each atom adds to its “partner” magnetic field, which results in a strong attraction capacity for the magnet. Otherwise, the magnet is just an iron bar.

In the third and fourth classes the professor presents the accounting concepts of Expenditure, Revenue, Liabilities, Assets, Cash Flow, Pricing and explains the game manual. He, then, divides the class in companies – Mines, Goldsmiths and Jewelry Stores – and begins the first play. After, everybody do the exercise of feedback where they debate about the results and situations experienced in the play.

**FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

All negotiations that occurred in the game lead the students to search for listening the voice of client, coordination of the actions of improvement with suppliers, management of the processes and the human resources in a synergistic way and presenting economic-financial results.

Prices of raw material and finished products (jewels manufactured with the pins) vary due to the plays.
Interest rates vary according to the economy global behavior, which will make that in each play different fees can be used. The financial investment is done automatically at the end of each play, considering possible spare cash.

The game was conceived so that, independently who applies it, its structure and its performance indicators are the same. The experienced situations by the participants allow confrontation due to reaction to changes be always present in the game environment, and the quantity of data that are collected enable the establishment of winner companies.

There are no significant data yet to make a deeper statistic analysis of the game results. This way, some considerations of general character will be presented.

From the findings that are made and the adding of new studies and theoretical research, one can propose a game structure in which the most modern organizational concepts may be integrated, simulated in a same instrument that makes its use feasible.

The game is an exercise composed of a series of sequential and structured activities, which simulates an ideal and highly competitive business environment, and which evokes in the participant the desire to learn the rules of the market.

The main disadvantage of the exposition lesson is the passive role adopted by the student. There is a growing acknowledgement about the importance of the participation of the one that learns as critical part of the learning process. Because of this, emphasis on training has been attributed by means of methods such as Business Games.

Games in general enable the continuous simulation of several types of decisions, so as participants have conditions to evaluate, in a short time, the results of the different decisions made. The trainee goes out of the passive situation and interacts with the system.

The application of a business game provides the student with a laboratory to test the several possibilities of a decision, to build interdependent scenarios, allowing him analyze and understand the decisions made in the present and which their effects will be in the future. Learning occurs by means of experimentation, one learning by doing.

Thus, the Social Entrepreneurship Game is an exercise that seeks to stimulate learning to low-income population and consists in a step in the process of evolution of the teaching-learning relationships, which began with exposition classes and readings, eventually stimulated by exercises and discussions.

REFERENCES


