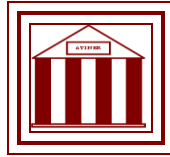


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**Practical Application of Social and
Environmental Marketing Assisting
Local Needed Community**

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Practical Application of Social and Environmental Marketing Assisting Local Needed Community

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Abstract

This paper reports the intervention experience of students and teachers at one of University Center in the South of Brazil, through an action research developed during Social and Environmental Marketing course. The objective was combine theory and practice using the course's knowledge and techniques in a real and practical context experienced by students. This research process favors encouraging the participation of individuals in pursuit of real world or practical knowledge in order to transform it. This research meets the requirements of three institutions: a cooperative association that collects and sort outsolid waste, the academic center that provides support for students education process and the Junior Company of the University Center. One objective was to address the population awareness about the importance of recycling garbage. The local community awareness seek the expansion of the quantity and quality of material received by the cooperative, whose direct consequence is the increased of capacity to generate jobs and improve income for the socially vulnerable individuals. At the end of the course the students developed and presented several marketing actions to representatives of the institutions involved. These actions built a meaningful learning experience, through the awakening for social and environmental consciousness. The teacher assumed motivational role in the knowledge building process and the student leaves the passive positioning to become key players within their own context.

Key Words: Action research; Social and Environmental Marketing

Acknowledgments: Our thanks to students and all institutions involved in this research.

Introduction

This research started from a situation that requires joint efforts between community and university, as well as an educational concept based on the statement: that "form and educate is much more than merely train the student in the performance of skills " (Freire, 1996, p.14).

First of all, there is a social and economic reality in Canoas, a city localized in southeast Brazil, with about 323 thousand of inhabitants that produces 230 tons of domestic waste daily. In this context, there are five cooperatives which provide selective garbage collection service in city. All cooperatives reach less than 1% of the waste produced in the city. Among them is the *Cooperative of Work Solidary Friends* (COOARLAS), an organization that sort out approximately 38 tons per month of recyclable material collected.

On the other side, there is a concept of education that argues that the role of the educator should be based on an ethical and critical responsibility in the teaching task and educational practice, which recognizes that there are not teaching without student and that the teaching-learning relation is mutual, in other words: "who teaches learns to teach and who teaches learns to learn" (Freire, 1996, p.23). In this sense, it is assumed that teaching is not transferring knowledge, and that form is not to shape an indecisive and accommodated body. Rather, teaching and form (educate) means to provide opportunities for the production and/or building knowledge. Thus, it is argued that students should take on as subjects of knowledge creation, and not as objects of knowledge transfer.

That is, one starts from an understanding that knowledge is constructed and unfinished, and it is a process that can trigger or sharpen a growing curiosity, which can make students more creative, more critical and possibly, more committed (Freire, 1996).

Based on the statement above, it was noticed a community need and an opportunity to combine technical aspects of management training, generate greater proximity between management academics and community and strengthen organizational practices of COOARLAS by proposing actions for Social Marketing. These actions are part of a Strategic Action Plan conducted by the Entrepreneurial Incubator of Solidarity of Tecnosocial Unilasalle and Synergy Consulting Junior Unilasalle, whose purpose is to assist COOARLAS leaders in the management process and direct their efforts towards to Cooperative development and growth.

For their achievement, the work was theoretically grounded on Social Marketing, which seeks to introduce a social change (Kotler; Roberto, 1992) and methodologically based on Action Research Method (Thiollent, 2011; Thiollent; Silva, 2007), which consists in elucidating social and technical issues through groups in solving the identified problems or advancing responses.

This work was developed in a semester and generated results in four interconnected dimensions: proposals to communicate the social product by printed materials, rapprochement between coop and the surrounding

community, using social networks in the communication process, focused awareness actions and the establishment of partnerships to reinforce the social product.

This paper is presented in three sections: the first brings the Social Marketing as a theoretical foundation for the students' work. The second presents the methodological design that brings a Freirian and action research framework, as well as the context of study and performance. The third section presents the results of this work.

Social Marketing

Social Marketing is usually developed by organizations, individuals, or an alliance that seeks to introduce a social modification. These actors embody social change campaigns and are called agents of change (Kotler, Roberto, 1992).

A campaign for social change focuses on a cause, which is a social target that gives a desirable response to a social problem. So, the Social Marketing aim is to raise awareness or sensitize adopters chosen as target about a social nature cause to them accept, modify or abandon certain behaviors (Kotler, Roberto, 1992).

For Kotler and Zaltman (1971, p.5), despite of possibility to address points of divergence and convergence between Social Marketing and its commercial counterpart, marketing concepts and techniques are important tools for promoting social objectives. For them, the conceptual structure of the Marketing Mix is demanded to assist the thinking about social context issues: social product, social value, access and communication.

The social product may consist of three ways. The first is intangible, has a direct correspondence with the cause and is called social idea. A practical example would be "recycling is to preserve the environment." The second, also intangible, is social practice. Here there is a further specification of the desired behavior, such as: separate dry and organic waste. The third form is composed by tangible products or services that provide support and/or strengthening the social cause. For example, may use the distribution of biodegradable and reusable plastic bags for separating organic and dried garbage, respectively, e/or garbage collection vehicles on specific days and services (Kotler, Roberto, 1992).

As in commercial marketing, in Social Marketing there's an expectation of consumers to obtain benefits such as return on cost (tangible and intangible) that they are willing to pay. However, the benefits are social nature (social value) and results of the exchange are generally long-term. Note that, the change in Social Marketing emphasizes voluntary behavior, not neglecting the influence of primary groups, family and close friends, which has strong power of socialization.

In the case of separation of household waste, the consumer's social product may change the perspective of a less degraded environment for a cost

translated on the time spent by the new behavior. Note that the value is shifted in a highly individual perspective towards the social.

In turn, the Social Marketing seeks to facilitate access of the social product, as well as its tangible products and support services. The strategy is to reduce the intangible costs of the product, as time search and retrieval, and so increase the chances of exchange effectiveness.

Communication in Social Marketing aims to promote ideas and social practices in order to encourage its acceptance. Often, this item is restricted to media campaigns that are unidirectional, however one must consider a broader scope since it is related to the act of educating and raising awareness for the collective. Means of communication and distribution and/or access through which agents of social change and adopters' chosen target exchange and transmit influences and responses to each other are referred to as channels (Kotler, Roberto, 1992).

The possibility of success of a campaign for social change, or change strategy, according to Kotler and Roberto (1992), is strongly related to the ability to understand the intended audience and to establish intelligible communication channels with it. This process is supported by the previous segmentation of the public, as well as for planning the level of depth of the social change that is desired campaign: cognitive, active, behavioral and evaluative.

In cognitive change, the change agents operate with modes of explanation about the interest' cause. In the recycling process, the agents concerned in increasing the awareness level of the target should work based on the identification of the informational needs and sources of dissemination preferred by this public.

The shift of action is a later stage after cognition, when are used incentive mechanisms in order to develop desired behavior with goal of reaching those individuals who are not sensitized enough to conduct a voluntary action.

Behavioral change requires the change of individual values, which is not always possible with the simple use of awareness programs. At this level punitive instruments are inserted, as fines. Within a support program where recycling process doesn't have public sponsorship, as to the provision of benefits or punitive instruments, behavioral change requires the voluntary participation of people. In this context, the program operates on the level of cognitive change with a focus on the two-way communication channels.

The most difficult task to be performed by the agent of change is the change of values. This change requires a continuous effort of the agent with the objective of minimizing the cognitive dissonance between peers. At this level social change is embodied by individuals who begin to work alongside the agents of change: engaging and collaborating in the of information dissemination.

A Social Marketing Plan developed to work in raising awareness about the importance of recycling process, without the intervention of public authorities, concentrate interrelated actions on cognitive levels and value perception change. Note that there is a favorable trend to recycling actions, result of

continued effort of the public and private sector in the dissemination of information on sustainability and the environmental topics.

Methodology Design

Coherently to the Freire idea (FREIRE, 1996) that teaching is not transferring knowledge, and that form is not give form to an indecisive and accommodated body, but rather to provide opportunities for the production and/or construction of knowledge, Fischer (1996) highlights that it is no longer possible to understand knowledge as merely an accumulation of information, in the format of a finished product, centered somewhere (a book , a report or someone's head) waiting to be transferred to another place, as the students' head. The author defends a conception of knowledge that assumes a dynamic, ongoing interaction between subject (student) and object (content), in which the teacher becomes a mediator who helps make this relation richer and more effective.

In this way, Freire (1992) provides the example of teacher who makes initial and brief exhibits of certain theme, and so that teacher as their students analyzes it jointly. The teacher is a challenging and students are curious, participating actively in the deepening and unfolding of exposure initially taken. And yet, Freire (1992) brings as another example the teacher who stands in a relationship of deep respect and affection for the subject under study, in the front of their students. He witnesses their students how their approach and think critically about some issue. Thus, encourages students to have, create and develop their own critical skills, and encourages both students and yourself to exercise a committed dialogy. Are therefore examples of educators that humanize and humanize then self, not tam, that dialogue effectively, that respecting the knowledge of their students and learn with them.

The Method of Action Research as Inspiration for the Work

The Freirian education presupposes in the teaching practice and research one appropriate method scoped in the commitment and understanding. To this end, we sought inspiration in the Action Research method proposed by Michel Thiollent.

For Thiollent (2011, p.20), action research is "empirically based, is designed and carried out in close association with an action or with solving a collective problem and in which researchers and participants representative of the situation or problem are involved in a cooperative or participatory mode."

Essentially, this method consists in elucidating social and technical issues through groups that gather researchers/teachers, members of the problem situation and other actors interested in solving the problems identified or in the advance of social, educational, technical and/or political responses (Thiollent, 2011; Thiollent, Silva, 2007).

This method can have types of goals: practical knowledge and/or making conscience. The practical objective is contribute to frame a problem in the best

possible way, with raising solutions and proposals of actions to them, in order to assist the agent/actor in the transformation of the situation. In the case of a work facing to collective problems, the practical goal is to diagnose the situation, prepare claims and actions, and seek solutions. The purpose of knowledge is to obtain information about certain situations. In turn, there is also the purpose of awareness seeking of the agents/actors about their problem situation, demonstrating its concreteness, nature and complexity (Thiollent, 2011).

This method not only constitutes in action or participation, but it must produce knowledge, to enable the acquisition of experience, contribute to discussion or advancement of discussions about the issue and aspects related (Thiollent, 2011).

In this methodology, the researchers play an active role in the sense of equate the problems encountered, monitor and evaluate actions triggered depending on problems diagnosed. However, it should be noted, always in conjunction with other agents/actors and respecting the formal and informal knowledge, because both are incomplete by themselves, but can complement and deepen each other (Thiollent, 2011).

In terms of activity field, can act in a concentrated geographical area (neighborhood, cooperative) or scattered (waste pickers) and in some cases may be related to a “framework of performance”, as in the case of a school. There are recommendations of group techniques that can reproduce realistic and symbolic situations. The work can be divided between observation groups, and each takes its findings to a central workshop (Thiollent, 2011).

The data collection and information is provided by formal and informal meetings. Planned actions should be developed, which specifies: who are the actors or units of intervention; how they relate to the actors and institutions involved, is converging or conflict; who makes the decisions; what are the tangible objectives and goals of action and criteria of evaluation; how to continue the action, despite the difficulties that come; how to ensure the participation of the population to receive and incorporate their suggestions; how to control the process and evaluate the results (Thiollent, 2011).

In this job profile, learning ability is associated with the research process, and are always accompanied by actions of educate, communicate and organize. Thus, the actors generate, use and circulate information, elucidate and guide actions, make decisions, both in planned activity as in the everyday one. Learning can also be systematized and organized through seminars and further studies and dissemination of educational materials (Thiollent, 2011). It should be emphasized that this process brings a mutual learning between researchers and users/population (Thiollent; SILVA, 2007).

Lastly, it is necessary to give feedback to all participants about what was done, what was the results achieved. One’s must broadcast externally, and one of the biggest reasons is to foster awareness in others as well, even they are not in that specific situation, they can live similar one (Thiollent, 2011).

Contextualizing the Work and Study Environment and the Performance of the Involved

The city of Canoas has 323,800 inhabitants, of which 39,500 lives in Guajuviras, the second most populous district of the city (CANOAS, 2012; 2013). According to the Department of Urban Services of the City, the Guajuviras neighborhood produces a monthly average of 235 tons per month of domestic waste, in turn, with an average of 30 members, the COOARLAS separates 38 tons per month of recyclable material collected from five different neighborhood of the city, being Guajuviras the main of them.

COOARLAS has been working since 1999. The main motivator to found the Cooperative was the need to expand the market of its services, as well as qualify the processes of management and operation (Brochier, 2011). It is supported by the Incubator of Solidarity Enterprises, an institution linked to an academic-institutional core that its function is to provide support to the training process of students, combining research, education and extension, called Tecnosocial Unilasalle (UNILASALLE 2012). In 2011/12, from a demand of the Incubator of Solidarity Enterprises, Synergy Consulting Junior Unilasalle developed a Strategic Action Plan to assist leaders of COOARLAS in the management process, directing its efforts to the development and growth of the Cooperative.

The strategies and the Action Plan has established in three specific objectives: to encourage waste separation in Canoas neighborhoods; encourage of cooperatives development and improvement of the management process, by the implementation of a financial and human resources Strategic Action Plan.

This material was prepared the first segmentation (Guajuviras neighborhood) and extracted the social product: awareness about the importance of recycling garbage in the COOARLAS neighborhood. The awareness of chosen adopters stimulates the social practice of the correct separation and provision of household waste that is produced in the homes of Guajuviras sector. This practice aims at expanding the quantity and quality of material received by the cooperative, whose direct consequence is the increased of capacity to generate jobs and income for the socially vulnerable individuals from their own neighborhood.

To meet the geographic and socio-economic reality of the chosen adopters, the students have done open interviews with individuals connected with Tecnosocial, COOARLAS and Municipality of Canoas and have prepared reports of direct observation done in technical visit to Cooperative. As a secondary source, the students used the municipality electronic newsletter, the Unilasalle institutional web site, on COOARLAS Strategic Planning built by the Synergy Junior Enterprise and informational documents from Tecnosocial.

Students participated in work meetings and discussions with the teacher of the course, with the representative of the Incubator of Solidarity Enterprises and the consultant of Synergy.

As a result, the students focused on four areas of activity in an interconnected way: communication proposals of the social product by printed materials, rapprochement between COOARLAS and the surrounding

community, using social networks in the communication process, focused actions of awareness and partnerships to strengthen the social product.

Results

The results going to be presented in four areas mentioned and going to be shown the products generated by students below:

Communication Proposals

This first result was in the form of printed materials, with the intent to widespread dissemination, the establishment of affective ties among stakeholders through the communicative process.

One developed an explanatory folder with the use of a guimmick: the “Reciclinho”. This feature aims humanization of a product or institution to establish emotional bonds between senders and receivers of the communication process.

With attention on the establishment of a structured long-term strategy, the Group considered the release of a monthly statement for this part. The demographic profile of the region as well as the target audience selected by the group - primary school children, had demanded a strategy of easy understanding that also could establish a degree of interaction with your audience, factors that justify the use of the format of a comic story, as shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1. *Comic Story with “Reciclinho” Guimmick*



The proposal submitted by the Group makes use of recycled paper or paper with seeds. This paper has a short decomposition time in order to begin the sprouting process of seeds. This material has important cognitive concepts appeal to rescue the life cycle of living things and the inherent beauty in the beginning of a lifetime from waste paper.

One Group developed an institutional poster, showed in Figure 2, whose purpose is to draw attention and raise awareness about the importance of sorting out waste. The proposal of material was cause a visual impact and attention about some information: amount of garbage produced and collected for recycling, information about the type of material and the gathering day. In this work, the students had articulated the proposal of social products and practice with a support product.

Figure 2. Institutional Poster with Visual Impact



COOARLAS and the Surrounding Community Approximation

To approximate *COOARLAS* of Guajuviras community and situating the community about the services and needs, one Group considered a quarterly newsletter. This Communication aims to express to the community's how the lack of awareness jeopardize the Cooperative and the environment. The Group considered the establishment of communications channels with the children audience, which has strong power of socialization among the chosen adopters.

Some Groups have worked with support service as information that tries to minimize the availability of recyclable materials out of the collection date, a fact that causes the material to be collected by the general trash collection in the municipality. Others, with articulated actions in facilitating the access of the social product or product support for the social product as informative material and/or magnet and stickers about the issue.

Use of Social Networks in the Communication Process

Thinking about Digital Marketing strategies, one Group established a plan for dissemination of the institution through Facebook and Twitter. These channels aim to establish a better relationship with the community by clarifying questions and receiving suggestions. In turn, the iterative process is stimulated by the creation of weekly "strips" with the character "Reciclinho".

Focused of Awareness Actions

To create the habit of separating household waste, one Group proposed making and distribution of mini-dumps among the chosen adopters. This social support product is suitable for use on the kitchen sink, location of easy access and with large waste generation. The project of group predicted two forms of separations: dry and organic waste, considering that according to the Cooperative, one of the main problems of the collected waste is the presence of the mate tea leaves (typical drink of the south of Brazil) and/or coffee powder.

Further illustrative symbols of each material, the product would have the topic sentence of the awareness campaign created by the group of students: "YES, Guajuviras is different", a counterpoint to the neighborhood is not different only by social and economic vulnerability, but it is different because they know and practice the separation of household waste.

The economic viability of mini-dumps and for printing the material exposed would count with identified sponsors. This aspect fits in establishing partnerships between institutions.

One Group worked with "Educational Graffiti" project, and predicted the use of the walls of Guajuviras' schools by artists of own neighborhood. These artists could exhibit art in graphite with issues relating to recycling and the environment. Another Group supported in "Trashed" project, which has a partnership with local artists to customize dumps and promote sustainability and recycling. The ideas of both Groups were using the school's walls and dumpsters as communication vehicles among young people, and them as disseminators of information. The co-creation of communication materials

among chosen adopters and change agents is an interactive process that provides a fertile ground for the adherence to the social product.

Some Groups proposed awareness lectures in schools of the neighborhood and planned workout to teachers as disseminators of information. The other considered a guidance brochure to teachers about recycling and selective collection, and designed t-shirts to the speakers, artists and volunteers. These support service and product could enhance the visual information contained within the school quarters.

Another idea is children's theater plays in Guajuviras schools where the main theme would be the recycling of waste. The idea was to offer an interactive action with kids and articulated with the theater group of the City.

Establishing Partnerships to Strengthen the Social Product

One Group project planned a partnership with the Unilasalle, suggesting the adaptation of institutional annual calendars in order to raise awareness and empower the academic community about the importance of recycling garbage. This action would be complementary to the actions proposed by other groups.

Another Group have used the guimmick "Reciclinho" to structure an action associated with Recyclable project, created in 2011 in Porto Alegre, whose aim educate people about the environment through music made with instruments developed from recyclable materials. The main characteristic of this project is to reverse the pejorative concept that people have about garbage, since from them it is possible get up music and art, and so there would be space for a positive behavioral change in relation to the theme.

Final Considerations

According to Ehlers and Calil (2004), it is possible to evaluate the actions at different levels: implementing and operating process, results, impact and context.

In terms of the implementation process, it is about observing the sequence of actions, the methodology adopted, and the acting style. In this sense, it can be stated that the process was appropriate to what was proposed in terms of methodological and practical terms. In operational process, similar to the previous process, it is about assessing whether what occurred was due to the conditions and upcoming deadlines. In this sense, it can be stated that the development of proposals for actions based on the content studied in the course of Social and Environmental Marketing, attended teacher expectations about conditions and upcoming deadlines.

However, it should be noted that even not applied in its essence, the proposed actions stimulated important insights for future actions of the Entrepreneurial Solidarity Incubator and COOARLAS. In turn, the structure of the new edition of the course includes the hits and adjusts the procedures of the 2012 edition.

In terms of results, it is related to the objectives of the proposed action effects. Some authors separate this evaluation between review products and impacts.

With regard to products as a direct result of the performance of students and the community, the work generated several proposals from printed materials to forms of interaction and awareness. The work contemplated different actions to raise awareness of chosen adopters as the target and others about the social product: the importance of recycling garbage. Within its scope, there is the social practice of separation, treatment and correct provision of materials.

Meanwhile, with regard to impacts, it is that which follows from the influence of what was done and what happened after it ceases, for the community, for to surroundings. Are effects that can occur along the same actions and later, as the commitment of students and community with proposal preparation of Social Marketing actions. Here, the process proved to be fruitful in approximation between students and COOARLAS. The reality of the surroundings became apparent and the problems raised by the cooperative, such as the wrong way of separating waste and the impact of this action on the generation of employment and income for individuals who depend on COOARLAS, was present in the own everyday actions of the students.

It should be noted that most of the papers presented reconsiders the chosen adopters targets, prioritizing communication channels aimed at children and youth of Guajuviras neighborhood. This thought expresses the importance given to the segment, as well as the emergency of actions for the generations that are in training.

In terms of context, it is the monitoring of factors or circumstances relating to the environment, in other words, the life of the neighborhood, the community and the organizations own involved. The works, as well as reports of the students manifest the vulnerability of individuals involved with the activities of the Cooperative and the importance of the organization to the community of your surroundings and environment preservation. The students stressed the importance of the field trips, where they experienced the solids waste separation process in a more comprehensive way, besides the cold and static reality exposed in the pictures shown at the beginning of the course. Composed with sound, smell and life, the contexts takes shape, was present and have stimulated new perspectives of analysis and possibilities of actions.

This research process focused the dialogue encouraging the participation of individuals in the pursuit of knowledge of reality to transform it, design fits into the liberating education proposal by Brazilian sociologist Paulo Freire.

Finally, besides raising social and environmental awareness of the actors involved, the proposed marketing initiatives built meaningful experiences of learning. The teacher assumes the role of motivator of knowledge building and the student leaves the passive and detached position of around reality to act in/within their own context.

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