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The Business Administration Curricula at Universidad Icesi and the Entrepreneurial Competences Development

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1. ABSTRACT

In this paper the academic development done at the Center for Entrepreneurship Development at Universidad Icesi, in Cali – Colombia, to design and implement new entrepreneurial formation curricula in the undergraduate Business Management program is described.

The new curricula is based upon 13 entrepreneurial competences and the stages that the entrepreneur and the project has to fulfil in addition to the development of the concept of the entrepreneurial components and the entrepreneurial Octahedron

The new curricula has five required course and provide a series of electives courses , internship and final project in entrepreneurship related areas. The basic objectives and the general content of each one of the required courses is presented.

The model has also been used in the “Jóvenes con Empresa” Program, a project covering 10.000 university degree holders or students in the main three cities of the country with the support of International Development bank

2. INTRODUCTION

The Universidad Icesi was founded in 1979, by the main entrepreneurial leaders from the Valle del Cauca, with the purpose of contributing to the harmonic development of the region, shaping the new entrepreneurial leaders, under the basic principles of: free enterprise system, entrepreneurship, democracy, social responsibility, ethics and justice.

The “Centro de Desarrollo del Espiritu Empresarial” (Center for Entrepreneurship Development) (CDEE) was created on January 1st 1985, as an academic unit of the university, with the mission of forging a new Entrepreneurial Culture through academic processes and with the permanent participation of the academic and entrepreneurial community. The entrepreneurial culture should be full of innovation and social responsibility and able to become an engine of development in all its facets.

The fundamental purpose of the CDEE is to motivate and to shape, through educational activities, the members of the community under its area of influence, in the development of innovative and creative actions that will allow them to become, throughout their lives: creators of new and competitive organizations, leaders of the existing ones, creators of wealth, productive employment, social wellbeing and personal, professional and social satisfaction.

Even though the Center have had many academics programs, activities, research project, congresses with a wide Latin American coverage, in this paper a very internal activity is presented: the development of entrepreneurial competences in the undergraduate Business Administration Program (UBAP).

3. CHRONOLOGY

- The UBAP admitted the first students in 1979
- In August 1983 the first group took a “New business creation course” with the project formulation and evaluation approach, popular at that time.
- In early 1984, it was realized that the project formulation and evaluation approach was not the appropriate one for our educational purpose and a small research project was done to identify leading programs in this area.
- In October 1984, with the support of Fulbright Foundation a study trip was taken to visit different institutions in the U.S.A. that were working in the subject. This trip included six weeks in Babson College, the leader in the area at that time and the opportunity to meet: Shapiro, Horn day, Timmons, Ronstadt, Vespers, Hoy and Brockhaus in different activities that were happening in those days in Babson College.
- In January 1985, the Center for Entrepreneurship Development was established as an academic unit of the Universidad Icesi and a decision was made to include “Entrepreneurial Creativity” as a required course for the UBAP using elements that

had been proposed in different schools around the world but were considered appropriate to the Colombian and Icesi's characteristics and environment.

Since that the development of a methodology proper for our students, was the main goal of the Center Different research projects to validate ideas concepts and theories were launched, several experiences in pedagogical terms were evaluated, academic materials were written, new professor were trained, several papers were published, the Latin American Congress in Entrepreneurship was launched as a forum for the exchange of education experiences with people all over the world.

- In 1991 the first edition of the book "Innovación Empresarial" was published and used as text for the courses we were offering to the UBAP and to the undergraduate System Engineering Program(SEP). This text, actually in its third edition becomes one of the most used text in Latin America
- In august 1991, a new curricula change was approved for all our undergraduate programs: the internship semester could be done in business creation.
- In august 1997 when the degree project concept was included in the curricula, one option was the degree project in business creation.
- In January 1999, the Center for Entrepreneurship Development start to offer elective course in subject related to entrepreneurship: Generation and evaluation of business ideas, Family business management and SME'S management.
- In august 2000, the UBAP did accept a new curricula change: two courses in entrepreneurship as required courses: Entrepreneurial Spirit (3 credits) in the first semester and Business plan (4 credits) in the eight semesters.
- In august 2005, the UBAP did accept a new curricula change: five courses in entrepreneurship as required courses: Entrepreneurial Spirit (3 credits) Entrepreneurial career plan (2 credits), Business idea generation (2 credits) Business Opportunity Development (2 credits), Business Plan (4 credits), in addition to the electives, the internships and project degree in entrepreneurship.

This change was originated by the development of two very important research based elements the model of entrepreneurial competences and the model of entrepreneurial components in line with the entrepreneurial process and the entrepreneurial stage concepts that we have been using along the years.

4. ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCES

The concept of entrepreneurial competences is understood as the group of attributes (motivations, attitudes, values, knowledge and skills) of an individual, which are manifested in behaviours that are definable, observable and measurable, and which are casually linked to a superior performance in the entrepreneurial action.

In order to define these competences, two main paths have been undertaken: First; the research and publications that throughout the years have been done about characteristics, behaviours, performance, attributes, attitudes, aptitudes, values, skills and knowledge proper to entrepreneurs., and second, a series of interviews with a

group of successful Colombian young entrepreneurs, as part of a research project, to identify the unchaining factors in the entrepreneurial career decisions.

The results of these methodological approaches were closed analyzed with more than 50 professional that were involved with the project “Jóvenes con Empresa” and later with more that 400 university professors that were trained by the Center for Entrepreneurship Development of Universidad Icesi to be the trainer of the “Jóvenes con Empresa” project which had covered more than 10.000 university degree holders in Colombia in the last two years.

The 13 competences selected as main “Entrepreneurial Competences” are defined in table No. 1, and there are behavioural and performance definition for each level: Low, Medium and High.

The development of each one of these competences implies, on one hand the development of personal skills and on the other, the development of conceptual elements. It is necessary to have an educational conception in which the achievement of these competences is given through a formation process that leads the participant into showing a behaviour and performance associated to the levels proposed and that the behaviour obtained in each and every performance of a higher level must be based upon the strengthening and the reinforcement of behaviours and performances previously developed. Therefore, the development of each one of these competences must be a continuous process given through the different stages of the program.

5. ENTREPRENEURIAL AND ACTION STAGES

Looking to ideas of different entrepreneurship thinking schools, at Universidad Icesi we to consider that the people in his (her) process to become entrepreneurs has to go through six basic entrepreneur development stages as shown Figure No 1.

In the other side the entrepreneurial project has also some specific action stages that are presented in figure No. 2.

FIGURE 1

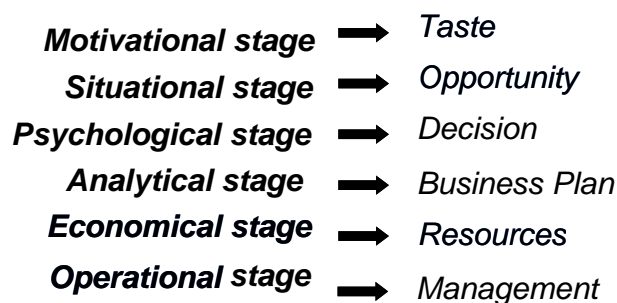


TABLE 1

COMPETENCE	DEFINITION
Entrepreneurial Career Vision	Is the formulation of an action plan with medium and long term goals and the capacity to realize it.
Social Sensibility	Is the understanding and application of the idea that progress and well-being must be built respecting both human beings and nature; that it must benefit all social actors and us all must fulfil this duty ethically and with a social responsibility.
Achievement Orientation	Is the worry to achieve higher standards of excellence, superior to the existing ones.
Self confidence	Is the optimism necessary to sail through all activities and it implies having the necessary knowledge, human and professional capacity, and the correct attitude and energy to achieve goals.
Widened Perception	Is to explore beyond the boundaries of one's circle of experience and reference in order to find new opportunities.
Flexibility	Is the disposition to change focus or to conceive reality under a new light in order to accept other options that allow tasks to be well executed.
Empathy	Is to understand other's emotions, necessities and interests and to integrate them to our own.
Conceptual thinking	Is to identify the relation existing among different components in complex situations that are not directly related and to construct concepts o models that are easy to apply.
Market Orientation	Is to permanently consider market conditions in all the decisions taken during entrepreneurial activities.
Management	Is to gather and integrate, in a creative way, the required resources to start, maintain and grow entrepreneurial activities.
Entrepreneurial networking	Is to establish, maintain and take advantage of interpersonal and institutional relations in order to achieve projected entrepreneurial goals.
Decision Taking	Is to analyze the different alternatives available in order to determine the best path to follow assuming full responsibility of the outcomes.
Action Orientation	Is understood as the energy, force, courage and dedication necessary to put into action and make real, all the ideas, proposals, opportunities and entrepreneurial projects.

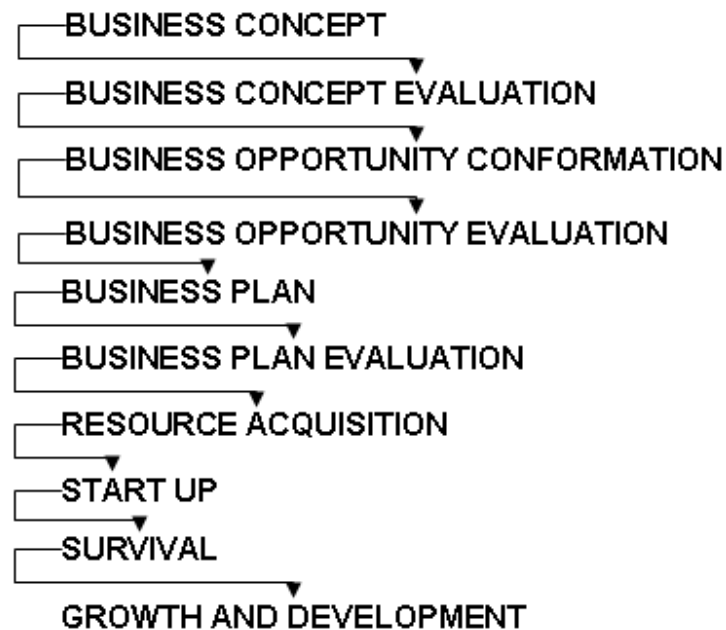
6. ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPONENTS

The final conceptual element that has been used in the new curricula design is the entrepreneurial components. As show in Figure 3, CDEE-ICESI decided to integrate all the components in the following eight ones:

- Customers with a purchase order
- Entrepreneurial Context information
- Technology
- Natural resources
- Financial resources
- Human resources
- Entrepreneurial networks
- Opportunity.

But they are integrated with a control axis defined by the three forces: Business Concept, Business Model and the Entrepreneur with his (her) Entrepreneurial career plan

FIGURE 2



7. INTEGRATING THE ELEMENTS

It was necessary to integrate all these elements in a curricula action and the process of integration did include different stages:

Figure 4 shows the integration of entrepreneurial stages and the action stages

Figure No. 5 shows the integration of the entrepreneurial components with the action and entrepreneurial stages

Figure No. 6 shows the integration between entrepreneurial competences, the action stages and the entrepreneurial

FIGURE 3

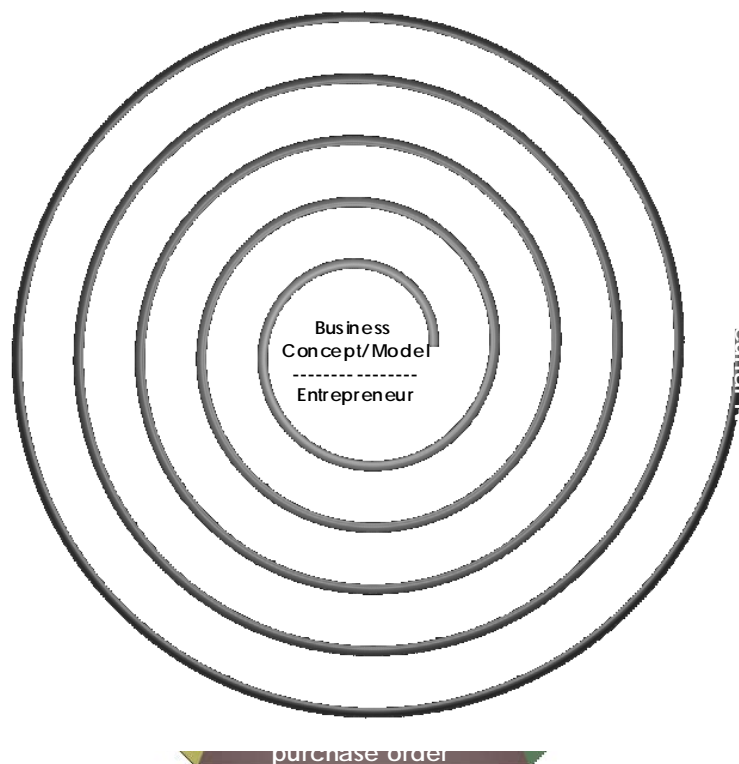


FIGURE 4

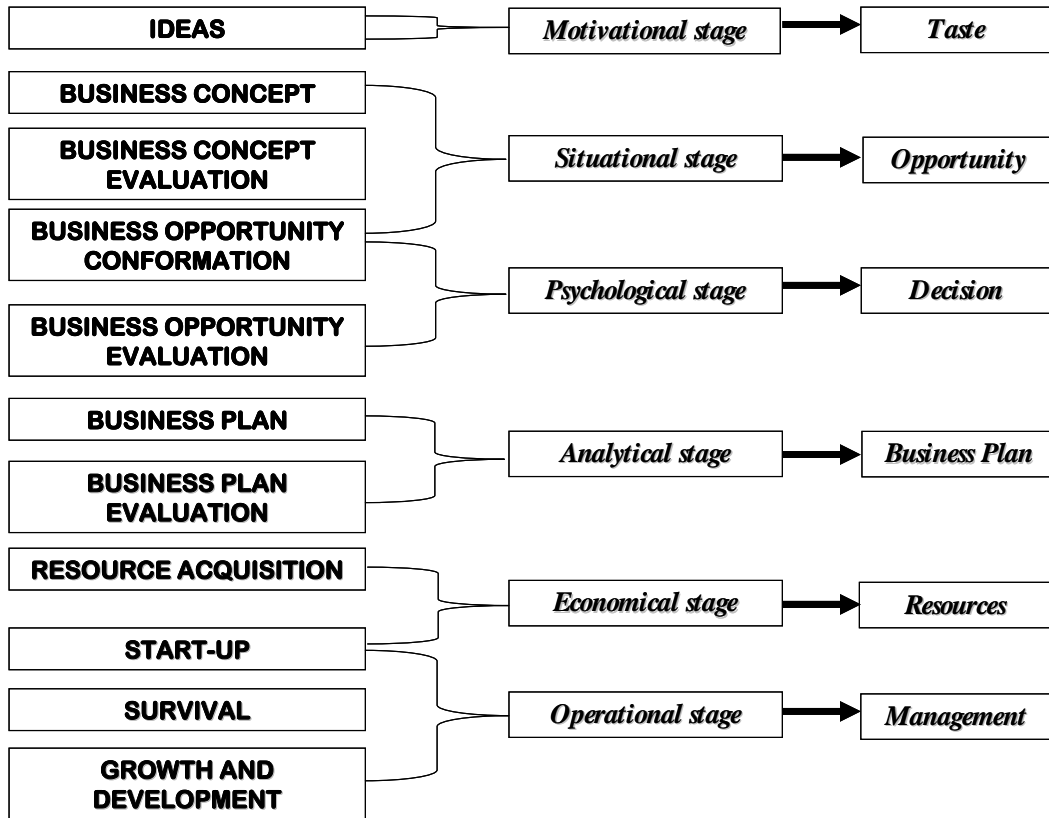


FIGURE 5

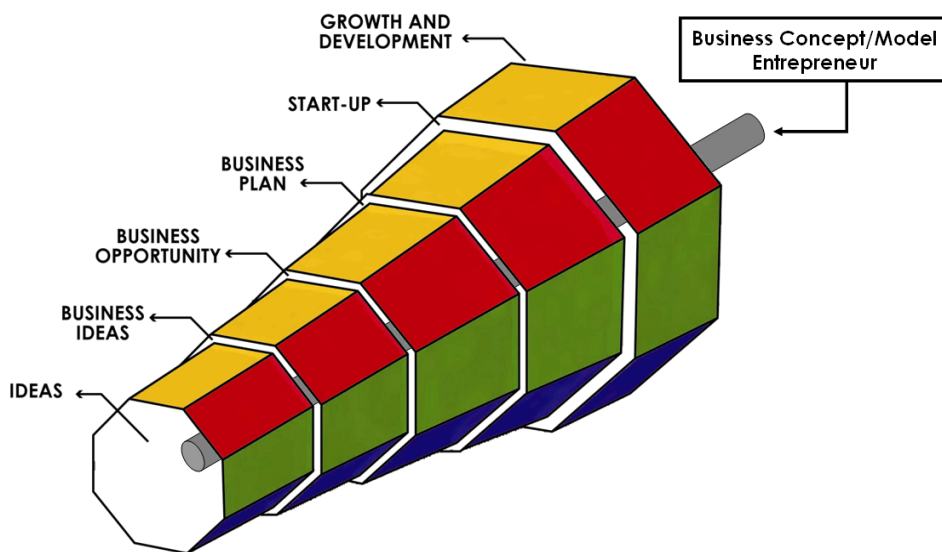


FIGURE 6

	ES	ECP	GBI	O	BP	INT
Vision of the entrepreneurial career	L	L	M	M	H	H
Social Sensibility	L	M	M	M	H	H
Orientation towards achievement	L	M	M	M	H	H
Self confidence	L	M	M	M	H	H
Flexibility	L	L	M	M	H	H
Widened Perception	L	L	M	M	H	H
Empathy		L	M	M	M	H
Conceptual thinking		L	L	M	H	H
Decision Taking		L	M	M	M	H
Action Orientation		L	L	M	M	H
Construction of entrepreneurial networks			L	M	M	H
Market Orientation			L	M	M	H
Management			L	L	M	H

Figure No.7 Shows the way that the development of the entrepreneurial competences is achieved through the five required course and the optional internship activity

8. OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT OF THE COURSES

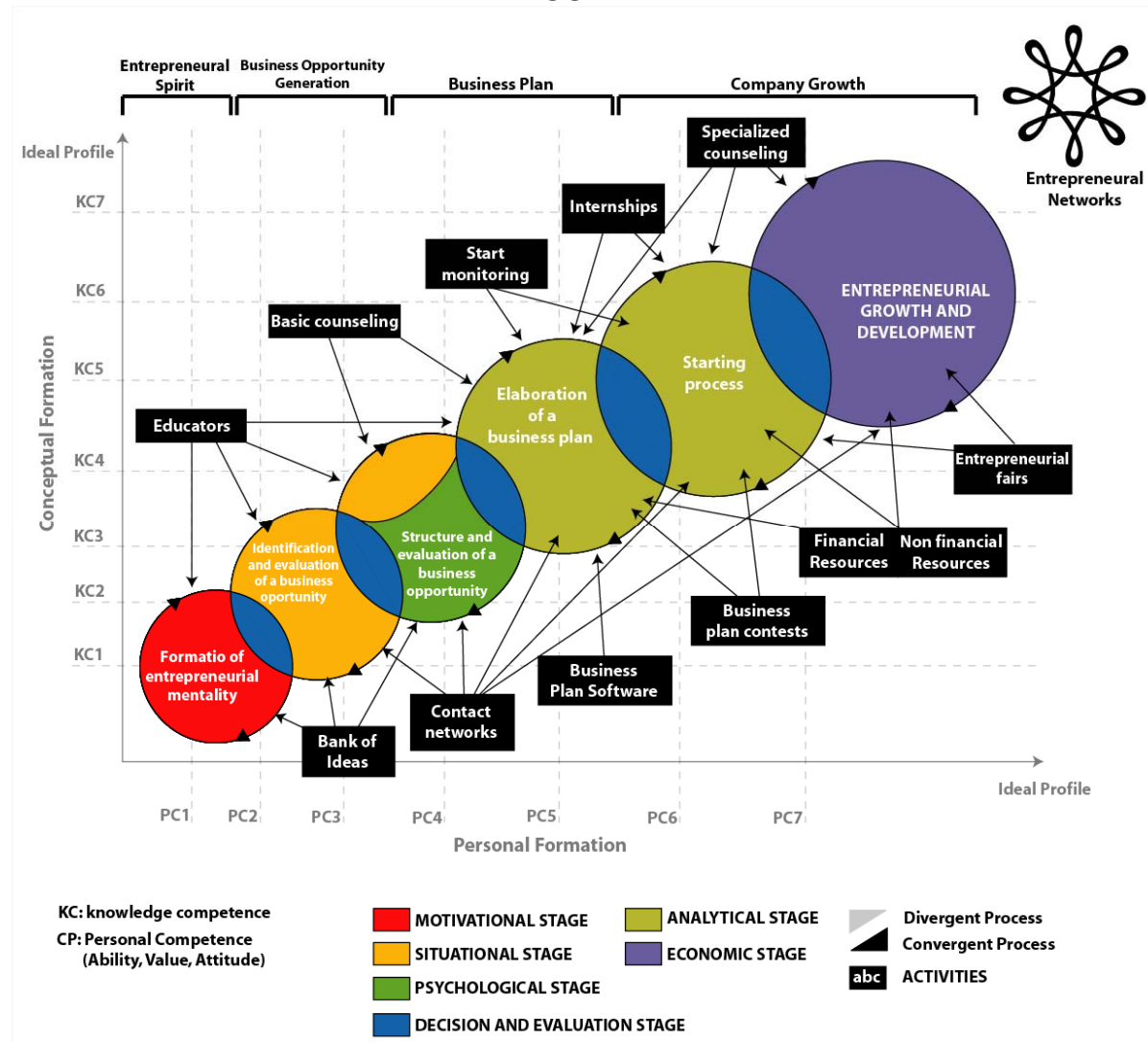
Even though every semester some adjustments are made to each one of the courses, not only in specific content but also in methodology; the basic ideas behind the courses are the following ones:

8.1 Entrepreneurship

Objectives:

- To get a positive orientation toward different work opportunities.
- To understand the important role of the entrepreneurs as socio economical leader.
- To develop a positive non conformism attitude which allows then to establish high levels of excellence?
- To identify the main trends and changes that are happening in the environment and that will bring opportunities for their personal and professional development.
- To understand the entrepreneurial process

FIGURE 7



Content:

- Transformation Model
- Entrepreneurial Spirit
- Trends and Changes
- The entrepreneurial society
- SME's and their role
- Entrepreneurship and Economic Development
- Entrepreneur: Characterization and Myths
- The Entrepreneurial process
- Components and stages of a new venture

8.2 Entrepreneurial Career Plan

Objective

- To develop your entrepreneurial career plan by doing a deep analysis about: yourself, your skills, values, knowledge, attitudes, motivation ; and considering your limitations and the environment restrictions to become a successful entrepreneur

Content

- My personal environment
- Me in the future
- My Entrepreneurial Career Plan

8.3 Generation of Business Ideas (GBI)

Objective

To enlarge the perceptual reference frame to be able to develop- many, unusual and varied- business ideas and to improve the capacity to evaluate them.

Content

- Perception development
- Creativity and Innovation
- Generation of Business Ideas
- Analysis and selection of hit ideas
- Business ideas and the Entrepreneurial Career Plan

8.4. Business Opportunity Development (BOD)

Objective

To develop a business opportunity integrating : the business concept , the business model ,the entrepreneurial octagonal prism , the Entrepreneurial Career Plan

Content

- Business Concept
- Business Model
- Entrepreneurial Octagonal Prism
- Spiral Methodology
- Business Plan Stages
- Chronogram for Business Plan

8.5. Business Plan (BP)

Objective

To design and to develop an integral business plan.

Content

- Basic ideas about Business Plan
- Planning the Business Plan
- Obtaining data
- Developing strategies
- Integration in a written document
- Financing a new venture
- Managing a new venture

8.6. Internship In Own Business Development

Objective

To start the new company.

Content

- Financing
- Legal Procedures
- Opening of the business

- Implementation of strategies

9. CONCLUSIONS

Through the years new approaches has been used at the Center for Entrepreneurship Development at Universidad Icesi trying to find the most appropriate way to develop an entrepreneurial orientation to our students considering the specific social, economical, cultural, educational, political and environmental situation of our students.

The new model, still in development and not cover completely with any cohort had shown up to this date to be a better education strategy to develop new entrepreneurs. Hopefully in some years we will have results to validate the approach, but we will keep our constant improvement strategy to help develop a better educational model.

10. REFERENCES

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