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Donna Project: social entrepreneurship as a strategy for productive inclusion and female empowerment

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Sustainable Development Goals / ONU

Gender Equality

Decent Work and Economic Growth

Reduction of Inequalities

Quality Education

Abstract. Gender inequality remains one of the greatest barriers to social and economic development in Brazil and is intensified by the socioeconomic vulnerability that affects women in contexts of violence, exclusion, and precariousness. The DONNA project, developed within the scope of the Accounting and Fiscal Support Center (NAF) of the Federal University of Rondonópolis (UFR), proposes working with women in situations of socioeconomic vulnerability, offering support in social entrepreneurship, financial education, technical training and access to management and credit instruments. The initiative seeks to combine the citizenship and practical training of students with local social demands, in line with the guidelines of university extension, promoting an impact both on academic training and on the lives of the women served. The project is also part of the Citizen Woman—Fiscal Citizenship for Women program of the Federal Revenue Service, expanding the reach of extension actions. The results of the project include both impacts already partially achieved and future expectations, demonstrating its social and academic relevance through the creation of new ventures led by women, the citizenship and professional training of extension students, and the dissemination of management practices and financial education at the community level.

Keywords: Socioeconomic vulnerability, Citizenship, University extension.

Contextualization and goals

Gender inequality is one of the main obstacles to social and economic development in Brazil, especially when associated with the socioeconomic vulnerability that affects women in contexts of violence, social exclusion, and precarious living conditions. In this context, the strengthening of initiatives aimed at productive inclusion and female empowerment is fundamental for the promotion of equity and social justice.

The DONNA Project, developed within the scope of the Accounting and Fiscal Support Center (NAF) of the Federal University of Rondonópolis (UFR), is part of this context by proposing actions of social entrepreneurship, financial education, technical training and access to management and credit instruments for women in vulnerable situations. By combining academic practice with social reality, the initiative materializes the

guidelines of the National University Extension Policy (BRASIL, 2018), reaffirming the transformative role of the public university.

The DONNA project is part of the Sempre Viva Program: for the right to belong to UFR and is articulated with the Citizen Woman—Fiscal Citizenship for Women program—of Federal Revenue, expanding the impact and capillarity of the actions developed. In this way, the project contributes directly to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably, SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduction of Inequalities) and SDG 4 (Quality Education), consolidating itself as an extension experience that articulates academic training, social commitment and community transformation.

Social vulnerability is understood as the result of limited access to resources and political,

economic and social power (JANCZURA, 2012). For Veyret (2007), the mobilization of the whole society and the mechanisms of productive inclusion are needed. In this context, female entrepreneurship emerges as an important strategy for emancipation, either owing to the need for survival or for innovation and the opening of new markets (FONTANA; THIMOTEO, 2020). More specifically, social entrepreneurship is understood as a means of transforming social challenges into opportunities, prioritizing social impact over profit (LIMA; GOMES, 2023). In this field, the DONNA project reinforces that the productive inclusion of vulnerable women can occur through training, access to credit and technical support, and the consolidation of micro- and small enterprises as mechanisms for social transformation.

The main objective of the DONNA project is to support female entrepreneurship as a strategy for productive inclusion and strengthening the socioeconomic autonomy of women in vulnerable situations, in line with SDG 5 (Gender Equality). To achieve this purpose, a set of actions is proposed that include instruction in financial education, training in the use of business management instruments and the provision of accounting and tax assistance, which also contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education). In addition, it seeks to encourage cooperation and the establishment of support networks among women entrepreneurs, stimulate the use of digital technologies as tools for innovation and competitiveness, and promote access to credit lines and development notices, aspects aligned with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

By proposing such initiatives, the project also contributes to the reduction of socioeconomic inequalities (SDG 10), promoting not only income generation but also the construction of structural conditions that favor social emancipation, productive inclusion, and the strengthening of citizenship.

Methodology

The project's methodology is structured on the basis of the integration of teaching, research and extension, as recommended by the National Policy for University Extension (BRASIL, 2018), articulating the outlined objectives with the extension practices and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) previously mentioned.

The actions are developed through workshops, mentoring, and individual and collective assistance, prioritizing active learning methodologies that allow the participating women to appropriate knowledge applicable to the reality of

their enterprises. In this process, students act as protagonists in the mediation of financial education, management, accounting and taxation content under teacher supervision while promoting critical and practical training.

The creation of collaborative spaces and support networks among women entrepreneurs is encouraged, in line with SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduction of Inequalities), whereas the use of digital technologies is incorporated as a pedagogical tool and business strengthening, in line with SDG 4 (Quality Education).

Finally, the guidance for access to credit lines and development aims to contribute to the promotion of decent work and inclusive economic growth (SDG 8), consolidating university extension as a space for social transformation and strengthening citizenship.

Results and Discussion

The results of the project include both impacts already partially achieved and future expectations, indicating its social and academic relevance. Among the advances verified, the promotion of financial autonomy and productive inclusion of women in vulnerable situations, the creation of new enterprises led by women, the citizenship and professional training of extension students, and the dissemination of management and financial education practices at the community level stand out.

In addition to the results already achieved, the strengthening of the university–community relationship, a central aspect of university extension, and the contribution to the debate and implementation of public policies aimed at gender and entrepreneurship. These results are directly aligned with SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduction of Inequalities) and 4 (Quality Education), consolidating the project as a transformative and socially engaged practice.

The dissemination of knowledge and experiences acquired occurs through the holding of the II Symposium of Extension; the course of Accounting Sciences; participation in extension exhibitions, such as the XVI SEREX and the V Exhibition of Extension of UFR; and dissemination in local and digital media, ensuring the visibility of the actions and expanding the reach of the social and scientific impact generated.

Partial results can be seen in Fig. 1.

Figure 1. Actions of the DONNA 2025.1 project

Quantity	Description
8	Meetings with partner entities (ACIR, MPE, Aranduê Institute, Public Jail, Women's House of Hope
5	conversation circles with women microentrepreneurs and women victims of violence
4	Workshops with women microentrepreneurs
2	All for Women Campaign; Event for Women
3	Student training (courses, study group, workshop)

Final Considerations

The DONNA project highlights its relevance as an extension practice capable of articulating academic training, social commitment and community impact. By promoting the financial autonomy and productive inclusion of women in vulnerable situations, the DONNA Project reaffirms the role of the public university as an agent of social transformation, contributing to the consolidation of emancipatory trajectories and the strengthening of citizenship.

The extension experience also stands out for enhancing the critical and professional training of students, who find in practical experience a space to apply technical knowledge, develop socioemotional skills and understand the ethical dimension of accounting and tax performance. In this sense, the project is directly aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 5, 8, 10 and 4) by proposing actions aimed at gender equality, decent work, the reduction of inequalities and quality education. In this way, it is consolidated not only as an action with immediate impact but also as an initiative that projects lasting effects capable of strengthening public policies on gender and entrepreneurship, in addition to expanding the dialog between universities and society in the construction of more inclusive and sustainable development.

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Ethical and Peer Review Principles

The authors confirm that this publication has been peer-reviewed by expert committees from a participating institution in the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI).

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