

Friendly Marketers: university extension for the productive inclusion of street vendors and street vendors

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Abstract. Informal work is one of the main forms of subsistence for millions of Brazilians, especially street vendors and street vendors, but the lack of formalization limits access to social and labor rights and makes it difficult to include it in public policies to support entrepreneurship and socioeconomic development. Feirante Amigo project, developed by NAF/UFR, is based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlighting SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth, by promoting the formalization and appreciation of work as an instrument of social inclusion and sustainable development. The initiative holds meetings and conversation circles to diagnose the demands of the target audience, workshops and practical training, in addition to individualizing face-to-face and online services and strengthening technical and entrepreneurial skills. The project is also aligned with the Fiscal Citizenship Program of the Federal Revenue of Brazil and the University Extension Guidelines (CNE/CES No. 07/2018), which consider the relevance of street markets as spaces for the proximity economy and the circulation of cultural and social knowledge. The proposal is based on socioeconomic vulnerability, which is understood as the restriction of access to resources and rights that directly impact quality of life. The central objective is to transform the reality of street vendors and street vendors, promote the formalization of their activities, ensure access to legal benefits, promote productive inclusion and strengthen entrepreneurship. The project has already partially achieved results, including the formalization of workers as MEIs, expanding social protection and access to credit lines.

Keywords: Individual microentrepreneurs, Fiscal citizenship, Socioeconomic vulnerability.

Contextualization and goals

Informal work is one of the main forms of subsistence for millions of Brazilians, especially street vendors and street vendors who work in urban areas. Despite its relevance for generating income and boosting the local economy, the absence of formalization limits access to social and labor rights, weakens social security security and hinders the insertion of public policies to support entrepreneurship and socioeconomic development. In this sense, it is essential to create mechanisms that favor the regularization of the activity, promote productive inclusion and encourage the appreciation of decent work.

In this context, the Feirante Amigo project is inserted, an action of the Accounting and Fiscal Support Center of the Federal University of Rondonópolis (NAF/UFR), whose objective is to provide free accounting and tax services, support

formalization and encourage entrepreneurial practices and fiscal citizenship. The proposal is directly supported by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN 2030 Agenda, especially SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth, which seeks to promote the formalization and appreciation of work as a vector of social inclusion and sustainable development. In this way, by encouraging social entrepreneurship and expanding the access of street vendors and street vendors to labor, social security and credit rights, the project contributes to the generation of equitable opportunities for local economic growth.

The initiative is also aligned with the Fiscal Citizenship Program of the Federal Revenue of Brazil and the University Extension Guidelines (Resolution CNE/CES No. 07/2018), reinforcing the social role of the university in strengthening work and entrepreneurship as instruments for overcoming

socioeconomic inequalities and promoting regional development.

The justification for the project is based on the socioeconomic importance of street markets, which are recognized as spaces for the proximity economy and circulation of cultural and social knowledge (AMOR et al., 2012). However, the predominance of informality exposes these workers to legal uncertainty, the absence of social security protection, and vulnerability to state inspection (ANJOS; FRAGA; TEODÓSIO, 2020). The literature shows that the lack of knowledge about formalization processes, combined with the bureaucracy for classification in the individual microentrepreneur (MEI) regime, compromises the sustainability of these activities (ARAÚJO; RIBEIRO, 2019). In this way, the project proposes articulating the university, public authorities and organized civil society around training strategies, providing technical advice and disseminating entrepreneurial management practices.

From a theoretical point of view, the proposal is supported by the concept of socioeconomic vulnerability, which is understood as the restriction of access to resources and fundamental rights that directly impact quality of life (BOFF; BARBOSA, 2023). The reduction of this condition requires social mobilization and inclusive policies (VEYRET, 2007). Extension projects and social programs have been configured as strategic tools for community strengthening by expanding citizen skills, fostering institutional partnerships, and promoting fiscal inclusion (ESCORSIM, 2022). From this perspective, entrepreneurship is not restricted to the generation of profit but also to the production of social value, especially when associated with social entrepreneurship, which seeks financial autonomy and the improvement of the living conditions of vulnerable populations (FONTANA; THIMOTEO, 2020; ALVES, 2021; FERREIRA et al., 2024).

The general objective of the Friendly Fair project is to transform the reality of street vendors and street vendors, promoting the formalization of their activities, access to legal benefits, productive inclusion and the strengthening of local entrepreneurship, in line with SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth, by valuing decent work and expanding income opportunities. Among the specific objectives are offering free accounting and tax assistance; promoting equitable access to information and rights (SDG 10); supporting the formalization of the MEI; issuing invoices and compliance with tax obligations (SDG 8); training in financial and business management; strengthening entrepreneurial skills and economic autonomy (SDGs 4 and 8); promoting conversation circles, workshops and training focused on fiscal citizenship (SDG 1); encouraging sustainable and innovative practices (SDG 12); facilitating access to microcredit and finance (SDGs 8 and 17); and reducing informality and increasing legal certainty for workers (SDGs 1 and 8).

Methodology

The methodology used for this proposal consisted of holding meetings and conversation circles to diagnose the demands of the target audience, workshops and practical training; individualized face-to-face and online services by NAF/UFR members; the production of educational materials in different formats; and the establishment of institutional partnerships with Sebrae, City Hall, unions and trade associations. Monitoring has been continuous, with the preparation of evaluative reports sent to the Federal Revenue Service and presented at academic events.

Results and Discussion

To date, the Feirante Amigo project has achieved partial results, highlighting the formalization of several stallholders and street vendors as MEIs, with a consequent expansion of social protection and initial access to credit lines, whereas future efforts aim to strengthen skills in financial management and fiscal citizenship through workshops and individualized services, promoting greater organization of small businesses. In addition, the initiative has stimulated the engagement of the academic community and civil society, consolidating strategic partnerships that favor the dissemination of entrepreneurial and innovative practices and the production of preliminary reports capable of subsidizing public policies aimed at productive inclusion and local entrepreneurship.

Final Considerations

The final considerations reinforce that the Feirante Amigo project constitutes a strategy of productive inclusion and fiscal citizenship, integrating teaching, research and extension. Its execution strengthens the social role of the university, which positions itself as an active agent in the promotion of sustainable development. The initiative is directly aligned with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN 2030 Agenda. Therefore, the proposal reaffirms the relevance of university extension as an instrument of social transformation and the consolidation of inclusive fiscal citizenship while contributing to the construction of fairer, more resilient and economically sustainable communities.

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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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