

Future Businesswomen: University Extension And Female Leadership On The Coast Of Paraná, Brazil

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Abstract:

Background: This study examines the impact of the Future Businesswomen Project, implemented by the State University of Paraná in partnership with the University Without Borders program. The initiative, conducted between November 2024 and August 2025, targeted women in vulnerable situations in the coastal region of Paraná, aiming to foster productive inclusion, income generation, and self-esteem through integrated approaches to gender, territory, and education.

Materials and Methods: A mixed-methods design was employed, combining statistical analysis of participation and certification records with qualitative data from participants' testimonials. A total of 706 individuals were certified, 83.29% of whom were women. Paranaguá recorded the highest absolute participation, while Morretes showed the greatest proportional impact on the female population. Enrollment patterns revealed a preference for low-cost, immediately applicable courses, such as handicraft and food production, indicating demand for rapid income-generation alternatives.

Results: Qualitative findings indicate substantial transformations in participants' personal and professional trajectories. Reported outcomes included enhanced self-esteem, increased confidence in entrepreneurial endeavors, recognition of everyday experiences as valuable knowledge, and the expansion of community support networks. Testimonials emphasized that the training contributed not only to technical skill acquisition but also to broader perspectives of financial autonomy and social agency, consistent with literature on intersectionality, emancipatory education, and women's empowerment.

Conclusion: The findings underscore the strategic role of university extension programs in advancing social justice and supporting regional development. The Future Businesswomen Project demonstrates that territorially grounded educational actions can generate both tangible outcomes—such as training and income generation—and intangible impacts, including self-esteem and empowerment, consolidating university extension as a tool for individual and collective transformation in vulnerable coastal communities.

Key Word: University Extension; Female Leadership; Productive Inclusion; Capacity Building; Regional Development.

Date of Submission: 25-09-2025

Date of Acceptance: 05-10-2025

I. Introduction

The coast of Paraná is a region marked by contrasts. On one hand, it stands out for its natural landscapes and tourism potential; on the other, it is home to communities that face significant limitations in access to economic, educational, and social opportunities. Within this context, women encounter additional obstacles, often linked to structural gender inequalities, which restrict their autonomy and hinder their integration into the labor market.

Education, in this scenario, plays a central role as an instrument of social transformation. Beyond the mere transmission of technical knowledge, it serves as a space for strengthening self-esteem, constructing identities, and expanding opportunities for income generation and economic autonomy. As Akotirene (2019) highlights, intersectionality should be understood as a theoretical and methodological tool that reveals the simultaneous effects of racism, sexism, and class inequalities in producing vulnerability. This perspective is essential for understanding educational projects aimed at women in contexts of exclusion, as it allows for analyzing how learning can be connected to the exercise of citizenship and the creation of more equitable living conditions.

It is within this framework that the *Future Businesswomen* extension project is situated, developed by the State University of Paraná in partnership with the University Without Borders program. The project offers technical and socio-emotional training courses to vulnerable communities along the Paraná coast. The initiative aimed to foster productive inclusion, enhance income generation, and strengthen participants' self-esteem, integrating dimensions of gender, education, and territory to produce meaningful social impacts.

Accordingly, this study aimed to analyze the relevance and reach of the project and assess the extent to which such actions contribute to financial autonomy, productive inclusion, and the empowerment of women in vulnerable situations. The premise underlying this work is that university extension, by engaging directly with historically marginalized communities, constitutes a strategic instrument for reducing inequalities and promoting social transformation.

This study seeks to contribute to the academic debate on gender, intersectionality, education, and regional development, emphasizing the importance of extension practices that integrate technical knowledge and life experiences, generating both tangible and intangible impacts on participants' trajectories. The following sections detail the bibliographic review, the methodological procedures and present the main results achieved throughout the project's implementation. Subsequently, data on project execution, outcomes, and analyses regarding its impact and significance in these communities are presented.

II. Bibliographic Review

Women and Territories as Political Spaces

The concept of territory, traditionally linked to the physical-spatial dimension, needs to be understood as a historical, social, cultural, and political construction (Raffestin, 1993; Haesbaert, 2004). Territory reflects power relations, modes of social organization, and symbolic disputes that are materialized in everyday life. When articulated with the category of gender, it gains analytical depth, highlighting that spaces are not neutral: they reproduce structural inequalities but also serve as arenas of resistance and transformation (Akotirene, 2019; Harvey, 2012).

When women occupy and redefine territories, they not only inhabit them but also politically produce them, imprinting new forms of sociability, economy, and life production (Massey, 2009). This process of spatial redefinition demonstrates women's capacity to transform adverse realities into opportunities for social mobilization, generating new forms of collective organization and income generation. Thus, territory ceases to be merely a backdrop and comes to be understood as an active social and political construction, profoundly shaped by women's agency.

This understanding is further enriched by the perspective of intersectionality, formulated by Crenshaw (2002) and disseminated in Brazil by authors such as Akotirene (2019). The category reveals that racism, sexism, and class inequalities do not operate in isolation but interdependently, structuring life trajectories and restricting access to educational, labor, and political opportunities.

In this debate, Hooks (2013) contributes by conceptualizing education as a practice of freedom, moving beyond the mere transmission of knowledge to constitute an emancipatory process. She emphasizes that historically marginalized women can recognize their experiences as legitimate sources of knowledge, construct political identities, and advocate for social change. Complementarily, Davis (2018) highlights the historical struggles of Black and peripheral women, showing that, when positioned at the intersection of multiple oppressions, they also produce repertoires of resistance, structuring community networks and collective survival strategies.

In the coastal region of Paraná, these reflections find fertile ground. Despite being a territory of environmental and tourism relevance, the region exhibits human development indicators below the state and national averages (IPEA, 2022), revealing profound social contradictions. These territories thus emerge as spaces of contestation: on one hand, the reproduction of structural inequalities; on the other, the emergence of collective resistance practices, many of which are led by women who, in seeking income and emancipation, redefine the political meaning of space.

Understanding women and territories as political spaces implies recognizing female leadership in the reinvention of the social. Through extension projects, educational processes, and income-generation initiatives,

these women transform vulnerable territories into spaces of struggle and political participation, contributing to new forms of resistance and collective organization.

Consequently, analyzing the relationship between gender and territory helps to understand how university extension practices, by stimulating the active participation of women in vulnerable communities, strengthen the construction of new territorialities guided by principles of autonomy, solidarity, and social justice.

Education as a tool for transformation for women in vulnerability

Education, conceived as a critical social practice, constitutes one of the main pathways for transformation for women in vulnerable contexts (Freire, 1996). According to Freire (1996), an emancipatory educational process should foster critical consciousness and agency, allowing historically marginalized individuals to be recognized as knowledge producers and agents of change.

From this perspective, education goes beyond a purely instrumental or utilitarian function, expanding horizons and offering opportunities for individuals to reinterpret their life trajectories and develop personal and professional projects (Apple, 2006; Gadotti, 2000). When directed at women in vulnerable situations, education assumes a strategic role, as it enables not only economic inclusion but also identity reconstruction, self-esteem enhancement, and the expansion of social autonomy. Therefore, it is essential to promote learning processes that integrate responsibility, ethical commitment, and social participation in order to address structural issues that perpetuate gender, racial, and class inequalities.

Popular education, particularly when articulated with intersectional dimensions, emerges as a transformative strategy (Hooks, 2013; Nascimento et al., 2023). The integration of decolonial feminism, intersectionality, and emancipatory educational practices allows for tangible impacts, especially in the lives of Black women in vulnerability, by valuing local knowledge, employing participatory methodologies, and recognizing the multiple forms of oppression that permeate everyday life (Crenshaw, 2002; Lugones, 2014). It is not merely a matter of teaching content but of collaboratively constructing collective processes of social transformation.

In this context, recent experiences in university extension programs reinforce this role. As Labiak et al. (2021) illustrate in their analysis of initiatives to prevent violence against women during the pandemic, the use of digital tools, collaboration with community networks, and territorialized practices were decisive in expanding the impact of these interventions. These findings demonstrate that university extension has the potential to generate concrete change by integrating scientific knowledge, social engagement, and public policy.

However, beyond community engagement and transformative pedagogical practices, strengthening education and university extension requires consistent policies and adequate funding. According to Pereira (2013), the National Plan for University Extension recognizes extension as an essential dimension in the training of students at Brazilian universities. In this sense, securing resources is a fundamental condition for expanding the reach of initiatives, improving methodologies, and ensuring that vulnerable populations, particularly women in situations of inequality, are included in educational and social processes (Nascimento et al., 2023).

Understanding university extension projects therefore involves analyzing the purposes that underpin them, as they aim to disseminate theoretical knowledge, strengthen research, and stimulate collective practices that contribute to social transformation (Gadotti, 2000). The discussion on education and vulnerability goes beyond workforce-oriented training, constituting a political practice capable of enhancing women's social and economic inclusion and reinforcing collective networks of resistance.

By transforming vulnerable territories into spaces of struggle and social inclusion, educational processes enable not only individual opportunities but also collective future-oriented projects, capable of reshaping relationships historically marked by inequality and exclusion (Freire, 1996; Hooks, 2013). In this logic, education ceases to be merely content transmission and becomes a space for dialogue, experience exchange, and community empowerment.

Thus, when universities assume their social commitment, they strengthen their role as institutions capable of promoting structural change, not only by providing technical training but also by fostering lasting cultural and social transformation. By transforming vulnerable territories into spaces of struggle and social inclusion, education fulfills a dual function: promoting individual opportunities for income and employment while simultaneously encouraging collective organization and the creation of alternatives to overcome historical inequalities. This dimension positions university extension as a key driver for promoting inclusive and sustainable regional development.

III. Material And Methods

This study is a descriptive-exploratory, mixed-methods research, given that its objective was to analyze the impact of the extension project *Future Businesswomen*, which was implemented between November 2024 and August 2025. According to Richardson (2012), quantitative research allows for the measurement and statistical analysis of data, facilitating objective interpretations of the phenomenon under study. In addition, Gil (2008)

emphasizes that descriptive research aims to reveal the characteristics of a specific population or phenomenon, establishing relationships between variables without the researcher intentionally manipulating the data.

The choice of a mixed-methods approach is justified by the need to capture both measurable outcomes, such as the number of certifications and territorial distribution, and subjective aspects related to participants' experiences and perceptions. This methodological combination enhances the robustness of the analysis, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon by integrating objective indicators with narratives that reveal the human and social dimensions of the training process.

Procedure Methodology

The methodological process for data collection and analysis was carried out in three phases. The first phase involved the implementation of the extension project in the municipalities of Antonina, Morretes, Pontal do Paraná, Guaratuba, and Paranaguá, encompassing women residing in both urban and rural areas. Courses and training sessions were structured to address demands related to entrepreneurship and productive inclusion, needs identified in collaboration with agencies such as Social Assistance Departments and community associations. In order to conduct the courses in the municipalities, five scholarship students from the Administration Program at the State University of Paraná (UNESPAR) worked alongside experienced professionals who volunteered to teach the courses and training sessions. This operational arrangement not only enabled the execution of the project without direct financial resources but also reinforced the collaborative dimension of the initiative, consolidating the university as a mediator of social transformation processes.

The second phase focused on the collection and analysis of quantitative data. Quantitative data were obtained from attendance lists completed by participants during the courses and training sessions, including personal information such as CPF (tax identification number), date of birth, and phone number. These records allowed for the accounting of the number of women enrolled and certified in each location. In order to verify socioeconomic conditions, data from the Paraná Institute of Economic and Social Development (IPARDES, 2022), specifically the Municipal Development Index (IPDM), were used. Socioeconomic indicators and primary data were organized into tables and charts, enabling analysis of territorial coverage, visualization of participants from each municipality, and the percentage of participation in each course. This cross-referencing of primary and secondary data made it possible to comparatively assess the project's impact across different territorial contexts, identifying where actions had the greatest proportional relevance and which structural factors influenced outcomes.

The next phase involved the collection and analysis of qualitative data, gathering spontaneous testimonials from participants throughout the courses and training sessions. These narratives provided insights into the subjective dimensions of the training process, such as self-valuation, recognition, opportunities for financial independence, reconstruction of social identity, and expanded income-generation prospects. Qualitative analysis was conducted using a descriptive-interpretative approach, aiming to identify patterns of meaning and relate them to the specialized literature on gender, education, and social development. This methodological procedure ensured that participants' voices were central to the research, valuing not only numerical results but also the meanings that women attributed to the learning process, thereby enriching the understanding of the project's social impact.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact, revealing both objective indicators of reach and certification as well as individual transformations reported by the participants. In this way, the study's methodological design strengthens its consistency and credibility by integrating multiple perspectives and offering a multifaceted analysis of the phenomenon under investigation.

IV. Results And Discussion

The analysis of data and results from the *Future Businesswomen* project revealed significant territorial reach and social impact in the municipalities of Antonina, Guaratuba, Morretes, Pontal do Paraná, and Paranaguá. The records totaled 706 certified participants, of whom 83.29% were women (≈ 588). In territorial terms, the highest absolute number of certifications was observed in Paranaguá, while the greatest proportional impact on the female population occurred in Morretes, where the percentage of certified women reached 0.89% of the municipal female population, a significant result when compared to the local socioeconomic context, as reflected by the IPDM (2022). In Paranaguá, despite a higher IPDM, the absolute volume of certifications stands out, indicating the project's penetration even in larger urban centers. These findings align with the literature emphasizing the importance of territorializing university extension actions and collaborating with local actors to increase participation and outcomes (Labiak et al., 2021).

Table 1 relates the number of certified women to the municipalities' IPDM (IPARDES, 2022), highlighting disparities between territories and showing that communities with lower social indicators, such as

Morretes, experienced a greater proportional impact. This result suggests that extension initiatives are particularly effective in locations where vulnerabilities are most pronounced.

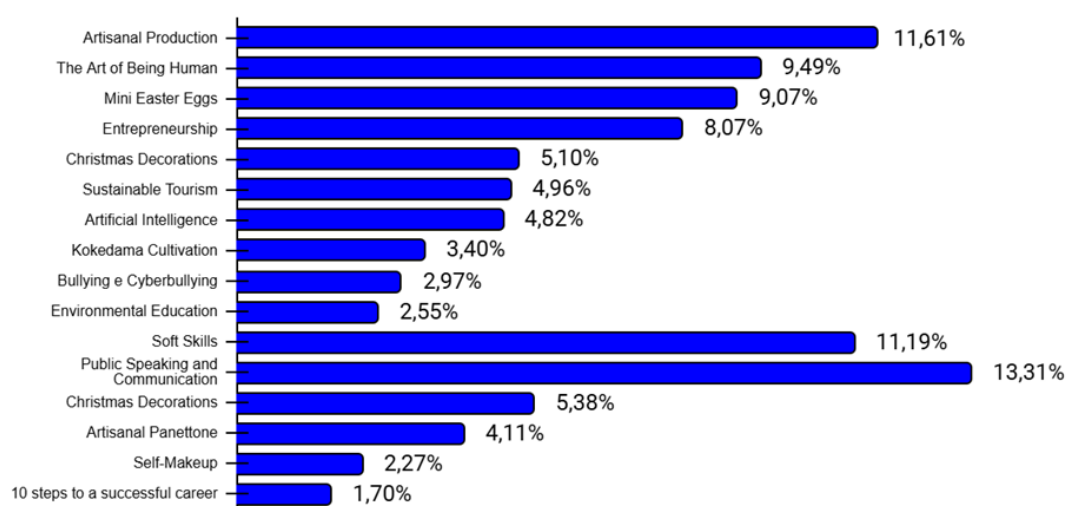
Table 1: Mulheres Certificadas e Impacto Social em Relação ao IPDM do Paraná. (n= 706).

Municipality	IPDM (2022)	Number of certified women	% of the impacted female population
Antonina	0,6410	41	0,44
Guaratuba	0,6933	39	0,17
Morretes	0,6018	86	0,89
Pontal do Paraná	0,6214	35	0,21
Paranaguá	0,7389	505	0,66

Soucer: Authors (2025)

Following the Graph 1 refers to the percentage distribution of participation in the courses offered, confirming the predominance of the artisanal production course, followed by the Easter egg production course and candies. Such demand reinforces that women seek training of immediate and low-cost application, with potential for fast financial return.

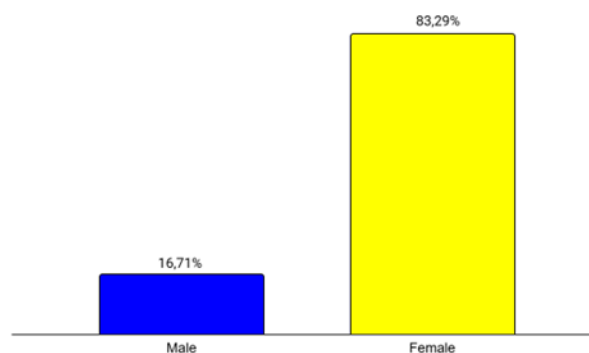
Graph 1: Percentage distribution of participation in the courses offered. (n = 706)



Soucer: Authors (2025)

The Graph 2 below presents the gender representativeness, demonstrating that 83.29% of certified participants were women, which reinforces the centrality of the female public in the project actions and the adherence of activities to the needs of this social group. This data is consistent with the literature that highlights gender vulnerability in the Paraná coast (Akotirene, 2019).

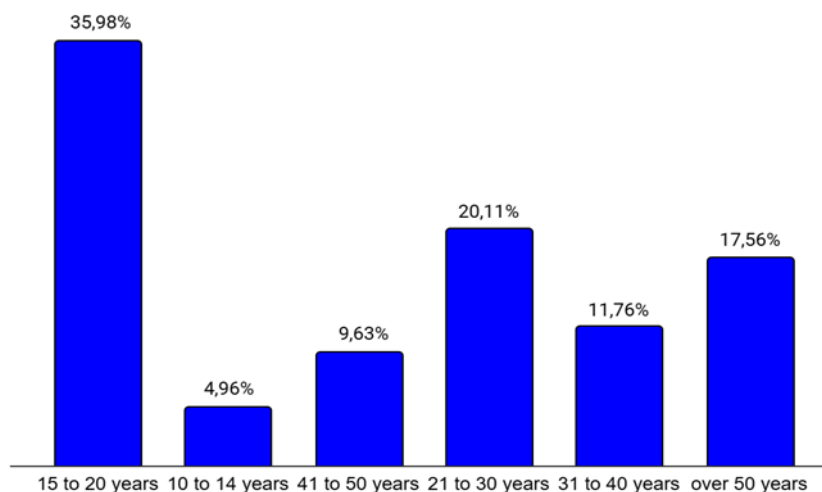
Graph 2: Gender representativeness in the courses offered. (n = 706)



Soucer: Authors (2025)

The next graph refers to the age group, which points to the predominance of young women, but also shows significant participation of more mature women. This data suggests that university extension fulfills intergenerational function, serving from young people in the phase of professional insertion to women who seek alternatives to income complementation.

Graph 3: Age group (n= 706)



Soucer: Authors (2025)

Regarding qualitative data, the collected testimonials reveal the transformative potential of the training process, corroborating both subjective effects, such as self-esteem, confidence, and strengthened social bonds and objective effects, such as income generation and the expansion of technical skill sets.

The student X, from the Handicraft Production course in Morretes, illustrates the relevance of accessible pedagogy and practical activities as drivers of meaningful learning, a concept developed by Ausubel (2003), insofar as new knowledge is directly connected to life experiences and needs. By envisioning the possibility of generating additional income, the participant reinforces the emancipatory nature of education, as advocated by Freire (1996), enabling learning to go beyond content and translate into concrete transformation of reality, as illustrated in the testimonial below:

“What impressed me the most was the instructor’s accessible teaching approach and the practical component with the candles [...]. I am still exploring different courses to better understand what I want to pursue as a business, but I already realize that this knowledge will be important for my life and may, in the future, generate additional income.” (Student X, Morretes, 2025).

Similarly, Student Y emphasizes immediate applicability and commercialization potential, highlighting the course materials as support for continuing her work, as expressed in the following testimonial:

“I am certain that this knowledge will transform my life, as I will be able to use the products at home and even sell them, relying on the course handbook as a practical and valuable tool to continue my work.” (Student Y, Morretes, 2025).

The Student Y expands this perspective by emphasizing applicability, a perception closely aligned with Kabeer’s (2005) concept of “Empowerment,” which posits that access to resources, skills, and capabilities forms the basis for strategic decision-making in women’s lives.

Student Z, in turn, identifies structural barriers (such as the cost and accessibility of raw materials) but envisions strategies to overcome them, demonstrating the transition from learning to entrepreneurship. This aligns with studies on female entrepreneurship (Brush, De Bruin, & Welter, 2009), which highlight how women in vulnerable contexts develop innovative and creative practices to overcome market constraints and expand their opportunities.

“Having a product at home that I do not need to purchase and can also transform into a source of income was what motivated me the most. [...] I intend to reduce costs and seek alternatives to sell externally as well, making full use of the knowledge acquired.” (Student Z, Morretes, 2025)

In the testimonies of Students A1 and A2, the value attributed to practical testing, experimentation, and peer exchange is evident. These elements reinforce the notion of collaborative learning (Vygotsky, 2007) and the role of social networks as catalysts for entrepreneurial processes (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). The following are the testimonies of Students A1 and A2, respectively:

“It was a very enjoyable experience, a full day of learning to put into practice what we learned and to start a business. We tested almost all the products here at home and loved them. I am interested in producing to sell, especially the scented candles, which I see as the most promising.” (Student A1, Morretes, 2025).

“I really enjoyed the experience; I met many people and we could exchange experiences, and we even kept in touch in other courses. I put what I learned into practice, making the recipe a few times [...]. I sold to family and friends, but now I will also promote it in the city’s sales group to reach a larger audience, since I am more experienced.” (Student A2, Morretes, 2025).

The affective experience reported by Student A3, in sharing the learning process with her family, highlights the symbolic and relational dimension of education, in line with Hooks (2013), who understands learning as a communal and affective practice. The student’s account shows that the Panettone course was not limited to the transmission of technical knowledge but incorporated affective and relational dimensions, allowing the learning to be shared with family members. This experience aligns with Hooks’ (2013) perspective, according to which education should be conceived as a practice of freedom, promoting emotional engagement and recognizing everyday experiences as legitimate knowledge. By performing the activity with her grandchildren, the student engaged in collaborative and meaningful learning, connecting technical knowledge with family life and reinforcing the concept of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), in which knowledge is constructed within concrete social contexts.

“The course was excellent; the instructors answered our questions, were attentive, and explained the process in detail. I made Panettone with my grandchildren, and it was amazing [...]. I did not end up selling, but I realize that I could have, since we received creative tips on how to decorate them. The course was really excellent.” (Student A3, Morretes, 2025).

Furthermore, even though the participant did not sell the products, she recognized the entrepreneurial potential of the practice, indicating the development of skills related to autonomy and economic agency. This process reflects the principles of Freirean popular education (Freire, 1996), which values prior knowledge and individuals’ capacity to transform their daily lives. The care taken by the extension instructors in conducting the course, attention to detail, and promotion of affective experiences contributed to strengthening the participant’s self-esteem and confidence, essential aspects for women’s empowerment and the construction of socially autonomous trajectories (Kabeer, 2005).

In summary, the testimony illustrates how university extension courses can integrate technical skills, affective engagement, and socialization, becoming instruments of both individual and collective transformation, capable of generating meaningful learning, fostering social bonds, and opening pathways for future economic participation and active citizenship.

The testimonies of Students A4 and A5 demonstrate that university extension courses are not limited to the transmission of techniques but function as instruments for expanding capacities and confidence for entrepreneurial practice. Student A4’s perception regarding product diversification, even without having implemented it yet, reveals the role of training in constructing technical repertoires that enhance future opportunities, supporting Ausubel’s (2003) notion of meaningful learning, in which new knowledge connects to preexisting experiences and personal projects.

“It was very important to acquire more knowledge. I already work with banana candy, dried bananas, and banana chips, but I learned new techniques that I still intend to apply. I have not yet produced Panettone for sale [...]. I loved the course and see it as a future opportunity to expand my business.” (Student A4, Morretes, 2025)

The Student A5 emphasizes the acquisition of accessible and applicable techniques, as well as the confidence generated by the course, which relates to Kabeer’s (2005) concept of women’s empowerment, highlighting the combination of resources, capabilities, and decision-making power to expand women’s opportunities. This subjective dimension, the confidence to undertake entrepreneurial activities is as relevant as technical skills, as it strengthens participants’ autonomy and agency in managing their professional trajectories.

“My experience in the course was very positive. I learned new preparation techniques and valuable tips on fermentation and fillings, all explained in a simple and practical way. [...] I have not yet produced for sale, but this course gave me confidence, because now I know that, if necessary, I can transform this skill into an income-generating opportunity.” (Student A5, Morretes, 2025)

Furthermore, these experiences align with the principles of Freire’s emancipatory education (Freire, 1996), which recognizes participants’ prior knowledge and encourages reflection on concrete possibilities for transforming their reality. The integration of technical learning with perspectives for future application also highlights the social function of university extension, as noted by Pereira (2013) and Gadotti (2000), insofar as it articulates academic knowledge with community know-how, promoting social inclusion, local innovation, and income-generating potential.

In summary, the testimonies indicate that university extension simultaneously operates across technical, cognitive, and affective dimensions, enabling women in vulnerable contexts to acquire skills, develop self-

confidence, and expand their opportunities for economic and social engagement, transforming competencies into tangible instruments of autonomy and agency.

Finally, the testimonial of the instructor highlights the reciprocal relationship between the university and the community, a central characteristic of university extension (Pereira, 2013). The exchange of knowledge among faculty, extensionists, and participants exemplifies Freire's (1996) conception of popular education, in which all actors are simultaneously subjects and producers of knowledge.

"I am an entrepreneur and had the pleasure of participating as a speaker in the Easter egg mini-course. It was very rewarding to see the joy of learning something new on each participant's face [...]. I also learned a great deal from each lecture and am grateful to everyone involved for the moments of exchange and learning that I experienced." (Instructor, 2025)

When analyzing the collected data in an integrated manner, it is possible to gain a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact. The results demonstrate that, by expanding technical repertoires and strengthening participants' confidence, the courses not only generated knowledge applicable at a domestic level but also facilitated the transition to commercialization and entrepreneurial practices, resulting in greater economic autonomy.

The centrality of practical activities, combined with the valorization of everyday experiences, reinforces that the training provided functioned as an emancipatory instrument, fostering the enhancement of self-esteem and recognizing women as protagonists of their own life projects. By confronting structural barriers related to gender inequality and local socioeconomic conditions, the training initiatives proved to be a concrete strategy for overcoming vulnerabilities.

Finally, the results reaffirm the role of university extension in promoting social and territorial development. The project embodied the university's public function by articulating academic knowledge with community know-how, producing measurable effects both in income generation and in the transformation of individual trajectories. In summary, the data indicate that initiatives such as the *Future Businesswomen* project are capable of transforming realities, promoting social justice, and strengthening female agency on the coast of Paraná

These results demonstrate that university extension, when territorialized and articulated with local actors, can respond in a differentiated manner to the specificities of each community. While in Morretes the proportional impact highlights the relevance of the intervention in territories with higher vulnerability, in Paranaguá the high number of certifications underscores the project's capacity to reach large audiences in urban areas, demonstrating both flexibility and broad reach.

The preference for courses with immediate applicability and low-cost indicates that women are seeking quick and viable alternatives for income generation, reinforcing the methodological relevance of the project's focus on training with strong potential for financial return. This finding emphasizes the centrality of the female audience and demonstrates the project's alignment with gender-specific demands, as it successfully prioritized a social segment historically excluded from productive opportunities. The results also reveal the project's intergenerational character, reaching both young women in the early stages of labor market insertion and women seeking supplementary income, thereby enhancing the diversity and potential social impact of the initiatives.

The integrated analysis of the testimonies indicates that the courses not only transmitted technical knowledge but also created spaces for socialization and the strengthening of social bonds, elements that function as catalysts for women's empowerment. Exposure to new techniques, combined with the recognition of personal and community experiences, fostered participants' confidence to undertake entrepreneurial activities and confront structural barriers. These accounts demonstrate that university extension goes beyond instrumental training, constituting an emancipatory practice that promotes autonomy, self-esteem, and social agency. In summary, the project proved effective in articulating technical, subjective, and territorial dimensions, evidencing that well-structured extension initiatives can serve as instruments of broad social transformation.

V. Conclusion

The results achieved by the *Future Businesswomen* project fully confirm its proposed objectives of promoting technical training and generating income-generating opportunities for women in vulnerable situations on the coast of Paraná. The reach of over 700 certified participants, with a predominance of 83.29% women, demonstrates that the initiative successfully engaged its target audience, strengthening their social and economic inclusion.

The high level of interest in the courses indicates that the training proposal was aligned with local demands, allowing participants not only to acquire practical knowledge but also to envision concrete possibilities for entrepreneurship and the supplementation of household income. These results exceeded initial expectations by revealing, through collected testimonies, significant subjective impacts related to the enhancement of self-esteem, autonomy, and women's sense of agency. The integrated data analysis confirms that the project fulfilled

its extensionist role of bringing the university closer to communities, delivering technical-scientific knowledge and returning tangible and verifiable transformations to society.

In this regard, the achieved outcomes validate the importance of public universities as promoters of social justice and regional development, confirming that extension initiatives can transform life trajectories and provide more dignified future prospects for women in vulnerable contexts.

It is within this framework that the *Future Businesswomen* project is situated. By offering training courses in areas such as handicrafts, food production, and basic management, the initiative not only transmitted technical competencies but also fostered new forms of socialization, self-esteem, and political agency. Participant testimonies reveal significant changes in their trajectories, confirming that education, when situated in contexts of vulnerability, can serve as an emancipatory tool. Furthermore, the cross-analysis between the number of certifications and the socioeconomic indicators of the municipalities of Pontal do Paraná, Guaratuba, Morretes, Antonina, and Paranaguá demonstrates the social relevance of the initiative. In localities with lower Municipal Development Index (IPDM) scores, the courses functioned as compensatory policies, expanding access to knowledge and income generation. The achievement of over 700 certifications reinforces not only the territorial reach but also the transformative potential of initiatives such as this.

In conclusion, the project successfully fulfilled its extensionist role by articulating academic and community knowledge, promoting productive inclusion and social justice. This article, in turn, accomplishes its objective of analyzing the reach and relevance of the project. The experience underscores the strategic role of public universities in transforming territories and overcoming vulnerabilities, demonstrating that extension initiatives can generate concrete impacts on regional development and the strengthening of women's agency.

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