CASE REPORT ARTICLE

IMPORTANCE OF UNIVERSITY EXTENSION IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING: CANUDOS PROJECT*
IMPORTÂNCIA DA EXTENSÃO UNIVERSITÁRIA NA FORMAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL: PROJETO CANUDOS
IMPORTANCIA DE LA EXTENSIÓN UNIVERSITARIA EN LA FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL: PROYECTO CANUDOS

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to describe the importance of university extension experience for vocational training and qualification. **Method:** this is a descriptive study, type of experience report originated from an “action research” lived in an extension project, and a sample composed of 43 participants. **Results:** the study describes some aspects that involve the perception of extensionists in relation to real situations, from which they are offered opportunities to put into practice the knowledge acquired during their academic education. **Conclusion:** this experience contributed to a vocational training more aware of social values capable of transforming the reality of communities assisted by extension projects in universities, especially the Canudos Project. The students, through the Canudos Project, were able to strengthen their human and professional practices, consciously engaging them in the struggle for the equality of social conditions. **Descriptors:** University Extension; Professional Qualification; Community; Nursing; Multiprofessional Team; Community Health Nursing.

RESUMO

Objetivo: descrever a importância da experiência na extensão universitária para a formação e qualificação profissional. **Método:** trata-se de um estudo descritivo, tipo relato de experiência originado de uma “pesquisa-ação” vivenciada num projeto de extensão, amostra composta por 43 participantes. **Resultados:** descrevem-se, no estudo, alguns aspectos que envolvem a percepção dos extensionistas frente a situações reais, a partir das quais lhe são proporcionadas oportunidades de colocar em prática os conhecimentos adquiridos no decorrer de sua formação acadêmica. **Conclusão:** contribuiu-se, por tal experiência, para uma formação profissional mais consciente dos valores sociais capazes de transformar a realidade das comunidades assistidas pelos projetos de extensão nas universidades, em especial, o Projeto Canudos. Propiciou-se, aos alunos, pelo Projeto Canudos, o fortalecimento das suas práticas humanas e profissionais, engajando-os, de modo consciente, na luta pela igualdade das condições sociais. **Descritores:** Extensão Universitária; Formação Profissional; Comunidade; Enfermagem; Equipe Multiprofissional; Enfermagem em Saúde Comunitária.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: describir la importancia de la experiencia en la extensión universitaria para la formación profesional y la calificación. **Método:** se trata de un estudio descriptivo, tipo de informe de experiencia originado a partir de una “investigación acción” vivida en un proyecto de extensión, una muestra compuesta por 43 participantes. **Resultados:** el estudio describe algunos aspectos que involucran la percepción de los extensionistas ante situaciones reales, a partir de los cuales se les ofrece la oportunidad de poner en práctica los conocimientos adquiridos durante su educación académica. **Conclusión:** esta experiencia contribuyó a una formación profesional más consciente de los valores sociales capaces de transformar la realidad de las comunidades asistidas por proyectos de extensión en universidades, especialmente el Proyecto Canudos. Los estudiantes, a través del Proyecto Canudos, ayudaron a fortalecer sus prácticas humanas y profesionales, involucrándolos conscientemente en la lucha por la igualdad de las condiciones sociales. **Descriptores:** Extensión Universitaria; Formación Profesional; Comunidad; Enfermería; Equipo Multiprofesional; Enfermería de Salud Comunitaria.

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INTRODUCTION

It is known that the first conceptions about university extension arose in the popular universities of Europe in the last century. The objective of these universities was to disseminate their technical knowledge in order to contribute to their own sharing of knowledge with the popular sectors. Later, this conception was expanded, further realizing the thought that there was a need for the university to share knowledge in the popular sectors. From this, some aspects that could be useful as basic elements for the formulation of what would later be called university extension were pointed out.¹

Understand the importance of university extension, both from the point of view of the interests of higher education institutions in enriching the learning of students by associating them with practical activities, as well as society that has access to various services aimed at exercising citizenship and human rights.

In this sense, it is noticed that reflecting on university extension projects is to reflect, primarily, on the objectives they propose, since the objective of the extension project is to disseminate theories, supporting research practices, aiming at contribute to the spread of new ideas and conceptions, new practices and theories.²

It is added, according to Rocha,¹ that it is through the extension of the university that it is possible to bring to the population the systematic knowledge developed in the university environment.

In this same perspective, it is complemented by Falcão,³ that extension is the most dynamic and lively academic area, capable of oxygenating the production of knowledge and asserting the university's social mission, from which concern is not only to train technical professionals, but participate in building citizenship.^{1,3}

These thoughts corroborate what is stated in article 207 of the Brazilian Constitution of 1988, which states that: “universities [...] will obey the principle of inseparability between teaching, research and extension”, that is, the extension University education is an interdisciplinary, educational, cultural, scientific and political process that promotes transformative interaction between the university and other sectors of society.⁴

In addition, by Castro⁵, extension must be realized as a fundamental academic practice because it is a strategic means to promote integrated practices among various areas of knowledge.

It is favored, by extension, from this assumption, thus, multidisciplinary, ie, an

exchange of experiences with various individuals, enabling an extension capable of prioritizing dialogue, autonomy, the exchange of experiences, the valorization of knowledge and the loving, making the university feel society.⁶

The definition of this theme is justified by the need to show that the university extension collaborates so that the professional future has an approximation with the real, concrete world. Therefore, it is essential to encourage students to participate in extension actions for the formation of a critical and reflective professional.

OBJECTIVE

- To describe the importance of university extension experience for vocational training and qualification.

METHOD

It is a descriptive study, like experience report originating from an “action research”, while conceived and performed in close association with an action and in which researcher and participants representative of the situation are involved in a cooperative or participatory manner.⁷⁻¹⁰

From the experience report, the Canudos Extension Project stands out, especially the one carried out in June and July of 2016, in the municipality Canudos Velho, located in the Northeast region of the State of Bahia.¹¹

Canudos has been an extension project of the Methodist University of São Paulo in partnership with the Brazil Solidarity Institute and since 2011, the project has been taking action in the area of health, education and environment.¹¹

As an extension project, by the Canudos Project, the objective is to promote dialogue between the university and the community, providing students with a life experience that strengthens their academic background and as engaged citizens in the world.¹¹

To date, around 2000 consultations have been carried out by the medical team; 1200, from Dentistry; more than 4000 medicines distributed, in addition to all the work that cannot be accounted for, such as actions with children and adolescents, health care for women and men. In addition to interventions, they also provide training, lectures and workshops, so that the community becomes self-sustainable.¹¹

Participants in this research were 43 students who participated in the Canudos Extension Project, in 2016, and who remained in the municipality, Canudos Velho, for a period of 15 days.

Data was collected through the express consent of the study population, where participants were identified and contacted by telephone. In this sense, data was collected through the individual

application of a structured questionnaire containing multiple choice questions, aiming to collect information about attitudes, opinions and behaviors related to the experiences lived during the participation in the Extension Project.⁸⁻¹⁰

Data was collected after collection, analyzing and grouping them in Microsoft Excel software, applying the Content Analysis technique.⁸⁻¹⁰

This research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Faculdade Santo Agostinho (CAAE: 66778016.0.0000.5602). All ethical precepts contained in Resolution 466/12 of the National Health Council were respected. Participants were asked to sign the Free and Informed Consent Term (FICT) after due explanation of the study objectives, their risks and

benefits, discomforts, all being guaranteed anonymity, confidentiality and privacy.

RESULTS

Sociodemographic characterization of volunteers

It is reported that all volunteers in this study were 43 extensionists, aged between 18 and 25 years, with a predominance of the age group from 21 to 23 years old (32.5%). It is important to highlight that there was no participation of smaller volunteers. 18 years old, which goes according to the project selection criteria. The sample consisted of male and female volunteers, predominantly female (72.0%).

Table 1. Description of the study population. Teresina (PI), Brazil, 2017. (n = 43).

Variables	%
1-Age	
<18	0.0
18-20	25.5
21-23	32.5
24-26	27.9
>25	13.9
2-Gender	
Female	72.0
Male	27.9
3-Region of origin	
North	0.0
Northeast	23.2
Mid-West	2.3
Southwest	72.0
South	2.3

In terms of gender, 72% of the volunteers are women and 27.9% are male, which is in agreement with the studies by Ávila¹² that deal with the panorama of Higher Education in Brazil, where the These data indicate the fact that women constitute a larger number at different educational levels and also in university education. Therefore, there is a preponderant presence of women. It is inferred, therefore, that women, because they are in larger numbers, tend to have greater participation in extracurricular activities such as extension projects.

As for the region of origin, the largest portion of the team was made up of students from the Methodist University of São Paulo and other colleges in the Southeast region, such as ABC Medical School, Santo André Foundation and UNIRIO, which shows the fact that 72% were originally from the Southeast region, followed by Faculdade Santo Agostinho, being the only representative of the Northeast region, with 23.2% of volunteers, which was of great importance for the adaptation of the group in the culture of Bahia, State sister of culture very similar to the state of Piauí.

Volunteer Course Related Data

Figure 1. Description of the course area of the study volunteers. Teresina (PI), 2017.

Of the 43 volunteers in the study, 79% had their area of the Health course, which corroborates the objective of the project, which seeks to perform clinical and laboratory interventions in the community, as well as to promote the social development of the population.

Among others, 2.3% belonged to the Education area, as well as the same percentage of volunteers worked in the Environmental area, and Exatas area obtained 4.6%; Communication, 6.9% of volunteers and 4.6% of volunteers were from other areas not covered in the survey.

DISCUSSION

During the project's stay in the community, a field hospital was set up to serve the community, and care was provided in the various health areas through a relationship of respect and reciprocity with the community and neighboring municipalities. It was also sought to promote the knowledge of extensionists about the Brazilian reality by allowing a living and the exchange of experiences with the communities.

From June 23 to July 9, 2016, the Canudos Project conducted consultations in the municipality of Canudos Velho-BA and surrounding

communities, with activities such as home visits, screening and outpatient visits, with a total of 313 calls.

On the first day of the project's activities, 30 home visits were made in the municipality of Canudos Velho and 68 outpatient visits such as medical appointments, which were carried out by medical students in conjunction with a Cuban doctor from Indira Moura municipality. It is clarified that part of these professionals belongs to the More Doctors program of the Ministry of Health, which aims to supply the shortage of these professionals in the municipalities of the interior and the peripheries of large cities in Brazil.

In addition, dental care was provided by the academic students and professional dentists who volunteered to participate in the project. In this sense, it is emphasized that all patients first went through the screening sector to classify their needs according to the care offered.

In the third and fourth days of activities in the municipality, a total of 104 outpatient visits were made, and in the remaining days of the project, assistance was provided to neighboring communities who could not get to the municipality of Canudos Velho.

Figure 2. Course distribution of the volunteers under study. Teresina (PI), 2017 (n = 43).

In relation to the different areas of activity of the volunteers during the research, there was a higher number of Nursing courses, with a percentage of 20.9%. This is evident due to the principles of collective health, which has been able to empower nurses within the Brazilian context, allowing perspective of knowledge and practice through autonomy and teamwork that

means the practice of nursing with social commitment and critical vision of the human-professional nurse.¹³

It is noteworthy that another relevant percentage was from the Dentistry course, with 11.6%, which proved to be of great importance and need in the community. It is warned that the lack of municipalities to access dental treatment

is very common, thus making it one of the most sought after professionals during the project's stay in the municipality.

It is emphasized that other teaching areas, such as Biomedicine, Communication, Physiotherapy and Medicine, had equal percentages of 6.9% each; Electric Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Pharmacy, Gastronomy, Veterinary Medicine and Social Work also had equal participation (2.3%) of volunteers for each course; Nutrition, Pedagogy and Occupational Therapy each obtained 4.6% of the volunteers and 9.3% of the volunteers were from the Psychology course.

In relation to the year of study of each course, among the volunteers, 27.9% attend the fourth year; 23.2% are in the third year and only 4.6% are in the second year of the course.

Most of the volunteers are in their fourth year. Next up are the volunteers attending the third year. Thus, as students advance in the theoretical knowledge available in their courses, they also want to advance in the theory/practice relationship, acquiring new knowledge and experiences that may support their personal and professional development.

♦ **Characteristics related to project actions**

It is understood that planning is an important tool in any action to be developed, mainly by stipulating objectives and goals to be achieved while listing strategies capable of fostering the practice and achieving the desired results.

It is believed that one of the relevant factors in extension projects is the elaboration of an action plan and that, to program the actions in the community, 93% of the students planned the

action to be implemented in the community, being that these, 69.7% modified their plan, knowing the local reality.

These data confirm the study by Martignago¹⁴ which states that through the extension that occurs the exchange between systematized-academic and popular knowledge, which will enable the production of knowledge resulting from the confrontation with the regional and national reality, providing the effective participation of the community in the performance of the university, being the knowledge somewhat moldable in its application, according to the culture of each society.

Factors related to the execution of the plan of action were 16.2% of the volunteers were able to execute their plan in less than 50% and 11.6% of the volunteers were able to practice 50%. It is noted that most volunteers (44.1%) were able to implement the plan with 80-90%, and only 11.6% were able to implement their action plan.

It is pointed out that when drawing up the action plan, theoretical learning is taken into account and, in implementing the plan, practical situations should be adjusted as necessary and, if necessary, the plan will be modified to achieve its purpose. Certainly, it is believed that some factors influence the execution of the action plan, practical factors, including: working conditions; the socioeconomic and cultural conditions of the assisted community; housing and food conditions, among others, as shown in the following chart.

Figure 3. Factors related to the main difficulty encountered in the project to implement the action plan of the volunteers under study. Teresina (PI), 2017 (n = 43).

It is inferred that the socioeconomic and cultural conditions of the community (30.2%) were the most prevalent factor experienced by the volunteers, which interfered in the implementation of the action plan, as well as the resources available (27.9%); Another factor related to the difficulty of implementation was food (6.9%), as well as working conditions in the community (27.9%), and only 2.3% of the volunteers had homesickness as a difficulty.

It is explained that because the project partly purchases materials through donations, there is a limit to the number of resources that can be offered and a major difficulty for the community to support the development of activities.

As it is a simple community in the interior of Bahia, Canudos Velho is a part of Brazil that suffers great needs and one of the biggest difficulties is drought and lack of water and, in that community, there is no basic sanitation, the

houses are humble, the bath is always cold, and the only water supply is through cisterns, and this water is collected from the rain or supplied every three months by water carts, but this water is not treated at all.

It is noteworthy that young people are staying in the homes of residents and thus have the opportunity to exchange experiences and share the culture of the place, and this rich experience produces knowledge and transformation for both

the host community and the team that executes the works with love and dedication.

Therefore, it is considered that a positive point to be emphasized is that, even in the face of a stay in which the volunteer will learn to share a room, get used to the humble environment, cold water in the bath, share the bathroom, among others, the hosting factor did not interfere with the execution of the action plan.

Factors related to project experience

Figure 4. Aspects related to the feeling that the project left in the volunteers under study. Teresina (PI), 2017 (n = 43).

Among the aspects related to the feeling that the project left in the study volunteers, it was found that the most cited aspect by the volunteers, by 34.8%, was the fact that they felt small in the face of reality and humanity, and that another 27.9% consider that, at the end of the project, there was a sense of accomplishment. Sadly, 2.3% of the volunteers stood out among the feelings, the helplessness, since there are many social difficulties that the community faces and the solution often involves more concrete political actions.

These feelings experienced by the interviewees during the project represent the various emotions regarding the reality witnessed and the experience reported in the academic experience. These feelings corroborate reports of other projects, such as the Rondon Project, where there is an importance in academic learning when participating in a project that involves the community, showing that academics, besides bringing knowledge, are able to learn and thereby expand skills that understand cultural difficulties and carry out health education in accordance with the reality imposed.¹⁵

When asked about the relationship between the experience of extension with vocational training by 37.2% of the sample, humanization as one of the predominant factors that contributed to vocational training. It is stated that the importance of new professionals in seeking practice in health services through actions that encourage solidarity, humanization and the

integration of health care that are imposed on individuals and the community.¹⁵

Of the extensionists, 30.2% had as learning to know the Brazilian reality; 16.2% reported learning to know how to work in a multiprofessional team; 13.9% had as a contribution to the profession the appreciation of life and reality and 2.3% the importance of having practiced what they learned in the classroom. Thus, it is reinforced that the extension activity, as an academic trainer, prepares the university student for the job market, incorporating health care strategies to the population and bringing out the humanist side.¹⁶

It was sought to establish, with the research, the contribution of the extension experience to citizen education, and of the volunteers, 51.1% of respondents reported that they helped in the humanization of care; another 27.9% said they contributed to the issue of social responsibility; to 13.9%, the contribution came through social awareness and 6.9% to the appreciation of work.

It is affirmed, it is through dialogue with the population that the needs are evidenced and the cultural particularity of each people is respected, complementing also that it is through the experiences that one learns to value the reality and the conditions in which others people live when they know other cultures, other realities.¹³

It was possible to infer, regarding the data obtained, that most of the volunteers (93%) in the study agreed that the university partially prepared it to act in the community reality, showing that there is a gap between the theory approached in the classroom and practice in the community. It is

considered that the insertion of the student in the extension at the beginning of the undergraduate, through a curriculum that includes the understanding of the social determinants in the local reality, allows a broader knowledge to the university students.¹⁷ Thus, when situations close to experiences are developed, a reasoning capable of solving a problem.¹⁸

Through the curriculum, the college seeks to be able to prepare the student to act in the Brazilian reality. It is noteworthy that the Faculty Santo Agostinho, in its 18 years of existence, has been consolidating itself in the regional and national scenario as an institution that values university extension, creating and participating in regional projects, such as the Rural Extension Project "Health Education". - PERES, Healthy Aging - Evening Roses, Strengthening the Humanization of Childbirth and Birth, Seeds of Knowledge and national projects such as Project Rondon and Project Canudos.¹⁹

Thus, the faculty has provided the exchange of knowledge with society, integrating various areas of scientific knowledge with social sectors, thus determining a more attentive look, contributing to the academic development and acquisition of technical and practical knowledge that will help in their educational practices and in their professional formation.

CONCLUSION

Through university extension, an action-based formation of citizens and professionals is provided, which articulates with teaching and research, inducing the production of new care practices and integral training, which is focused not only on technical learning, but in ethics, citizen responsibility and social commitment. This mechanism develops from the relations between subjects with different knowledge and the dialectical confrontations between theory and practice that are established in learning and doing in extension experiences.

From this perspective, it is concluded that the extension projects, in particular, the Canudos Project, put into practice action plans prepared by universities (through the initiative of professors and students) in order to foster their teaching and learning practices. as well as acquiring and producing new knowledge through interaction with communities. The project participants are thus allowed a more humanitarian look from a perspective of innovating knowledge with the purpose that there is a need to instantly improve the old and immediately learn the new.

Therefore, it is considered that the university extension is of paramount importance since, at the moment of the experience, it is realized that nothing in the world is an absolute truth and that their knowledge about certain subjects and

practices can be changed or influenced by social reality. It is within the population that the student has a real sense of how much he can help and, especially, learn from the main client: people.

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