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UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE IN LEGAL PILLS TO ACHIEVE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

ACTUACIÓN UNIVERSITARIA EN PÍLDORAS LEGALES PARA EL LOGRO DE LOS OBJETIVOS DE DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze a university extension project developed at the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Brazil to implement the 2030 Agenda Goals. The article describes and analyzes the Project "Access to Justice through Rights: Legal Pills" in its actions developed to promote the Sustainable Development Goals through the dissemination of "legal pills" on social networks to increase citizens' knowledge about the Goals and rights related to them, to promote access to justice through rights. After descriptive analysis of data related to the Project, with presentation of the objectives and work methodology in the elaboration and dissemination of the legal pills, the results regarding the period of approach of the Objectives were presented. The data obtained indicated the fruitful and transformative role of university extension to promote citizen knowledge that is essential for social empowerment and active mobilization in favor of its full implementation.

Keywords:

University extension, Sustainable Development Goals, Access to Justice, Human Rights.

RESUMEN

Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar un proyecto de extensión universitaria desarrollado en la Universidad Federal de Minas Gerais en Brasil para implementar los Objetivos de la Agenda 2030. El artículo describe y analiza el Proyecto "Acceso a la Justicia a través de los Derechos: Píldoras Legales" en sus acciones desarrolladas para promover los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible a través de la difusión de "píldoras legales" en las redes sociales para ampliar el conocimiento de los ciudadanos sobre los Objetivos y sobre los derechos relacionados con ellos, y así promover el acceso a la justicia a través de los derechos. Después del análisis descriptivo de los datos relacionados con el Proyecto, con la presentación de los objetivos y metodología de trabajo en la elaboración y difusión de las píldoras legales, fueron presentados los resultados en cuanto al período de acercamiento de los Objetivos. Los datos obtenidos indicaron el papel fructífero y transformador de la extensión universitaria en la promoción del conocimiento ciudadano sobre los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible, conocimiento que es esencial para el empoderamiento social y la movilización activa a favor de su plena implementación.

Palabras clave:

Extensión universitaria, Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible, Acceso a la Justicia, Derechos Humanos.

INTRODUCTION

Adopting the concept of access to justice through rights, from the perspective of effectiveness, justice will be achieved when individuals, groups and collectives have the conscience and the opportunity to know and to inform themselves about their rights in a satisfactory way. Thus, it presupposes policies in the field of information, education and dissemination of legal knowledge, which aim to enable citizens and communities to know and recognize their rights, moving towards their effectiveness.

The Teaching, Research and Extension Program in Access to Justice and Conflict Resolution of the Faculty of Law of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (RECAJ-UFGM) was created in 2007 and has as its driving force the execution of projects related to the theme of access to justice through rights in Brazil, with the participation of undergraduate and postgraduate students in theoretical studies and practical activities to play the role of agents of social transformation guided by multiple and transversal premises for the promotion of Human Rights. Among the developed projects structured around university and extension actions to create links between the academic community and the external public and the dissemination of scientific knowledge, is the Project "Access to Justice through Rights: Legal Pills", named in the everyday actions by "Legal Pills Project" (Federal University of Minas Gerais, 2024).

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020, by imposing social distancing as one of the main health measures to combat it, brought with it the need to think about innovative adaptations to academic activities. At this juncture, the Legal Pills Project was created in May 2020, based on an edict from the Pro-Rector of Extension and Pro-Rector of Postgraduate Studies at the Federal University of Minas Gerais for the development of extension projects, new or already in progress, to combat the COVID-19 pandemic (Federal University of Minas Gerais, 2024).

The Legal Pills Project was instituted under the movement of adapting methodologies in university extension with the goal of continuing its actions and activities virtually in the context of social distancing in the COVID-19 pandemic, within the possibilities and limitations offered by remote performance, as well as to meet Higher Education's premise of collaborating with the integral academic training of students, based on citizenship and the social function of higher education, a concern that is imposed even more decisively within the scope of public universities (Orsini et al., 2023).

The Project's actions were initially aimed at contributing to confront the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences and with the cooling of the health crisis measures were established centered in Human Rights and promoting of

the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development assumed by the nations members of the United Nations (UN), including Brazil, where the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFGM) is installed, to which the project is institutionally linked (Federal University of Minas Gerais, 2024).

The present work aims to promote a critical analysis of the experience lived at UFGM in Brazil with the Legal Pills Project in the development of research and extension actions aimed at promoting Human Rights and the SDGs and, thus, contributing to the sharing the extension university experience as a channel for university action to develop the SDGs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The RECAJ UFGM Program, which includes the Legal Pills Project, promotes projects aimed at contributing to the effective access to justice through rights in Brazil, expanding the mechanisms for achieving justice, building and innovating Brazilian legislation with a focus on human rights and coexistence agreements through non-violence, consensus, dialogue and respect for diversity and plurality, stimulating education and culture aimed at social peace.

The extension actions developed, among which the presented Project is located, are inseparable from teaching and research and includes the dialogical, constructive and transformative interaction of the academic community with other sectors of society, through exchange and construction of knowledge aimed at improving public policies and social development (Orsini et al., 2023).

The Legal Pills Project aims, in this sense, to train subjects for a broader understanding of rights, providing them with conditions for access to justice as "access to justice through rights" (Orsini et al., 2023). From this perspective, access involves a dimension related to guaranteeing the effectiveness of rights, which encompasses the axes of information about rights; knowledge that allows recourse to an instance or entity capable of resolving any conflicts; and effective repair of injustice or inequality caused by the violation of a right. The other dimension of access under this conception refers to the participation of subjects in the configuration of the law itself, implying the creation and recognition of new law categories (Avritzer et al., 2014).

At this juncture, justice will be achieved when injured individuals, groups and collectives have the awareness and the opportunity to know and satisfactorily inform themselves about their rights. It is therefore a question of public policies in the field of information, education and dissemination of legal knowledge with a view to empower citizens and communities to, by themselves, face a situation of disrespect, violation, exclusion, offense or deprivation of rights, recognize it as such (Avritzer et al., 2014, p. 20).

The barriers to said access are multiple – of economic, social and cultural nature, as well as symbolic, so any and all information and dissemination must be easily understandable, worked in a didactic way, accessible even to citizens who have a special need. Legal information and disclosure are important aspects of any policy on access to justice via rights. The role of the Public University is highlighted in this context given the wide possibility of action and action in the field of legal information and dissemination aimed at access to justice through rights, especially for being the holder of technical and scientific knowledge.

It is therefore necessary to problematize more accessible paths for individuals to achieve justice and rights, paths that are less bureaucratic, less formal and more connected to social groups, which are capable of achieving access to justice through rights. From this perspective, access to justice implies a condition for the full exercise of citizenship and the realization of democracy (Avritzer et al., 2014), necessary elements for the fulfillment of the Democratic State of Law in Brazil, which reinforces the importance of this conception of access to justice and the indispensability of its promotion in the social scenario.

Justice will be achieved when injured individuals, groups and collectives have awareness and the opportunity to know and be informed, in a satisfactory manner, about their rights. It is not, therefore, a matter of merely creating spaces for conflict resolution, judicial or extrajudicial. But rather, public policies in the field of information, education and dissemination of legal knowledge with a view to enabling citizens and communities to, on their own, when faced with a situation of disrespect, violation, exclusion, offense or deprivation of rights, recognize it as such (Avritzer et al., 2014, p. 20).

Access to justice therefore recognizes the role of agencies and institutions in addition to the Judiciary in providing access, as well as other processes and procedures for carrying it out outside the judicial process, which can take place in judicial environments or not (Watanabe, 2011).

At this juncture, it appears possible to strengthen and expand access to justice and the realization of rights through the inclusion of non-judicial instruments and other complementary spheres aimed at resolving conflicts (Soler, 2014).

Therefore, action that involves multiple voices is necessary, in true dialogue with real life and real social groups and under a counter-hegemonic conception. Thus, the need for rights education for sustainable development and human rights stands out, in order to provide knowledge, skills, knowledge and autonomy.

This critical didactic-pedagogical construction must be inserted into a paradigm of transformation constituted by a multidisciplinary – or even transdisciplinary – process of problematizing knowledge and reflecting on reality, with

the objective of a movement to overcome the old unidisciplinary, monological and insufficiently reflective (Freire, 1980, 2005). As highlighted by Faundez and Freire (2017), ideas and conceptual models are necessary to understand the world, but which do not themselves become reality, models that are creatively inapplicable to reality or even acquire a value greater than reality itself.

The globalized society, considered in this way not only in relation to the economic-financial or communicational process resulting from the unlimited expansion of the digital era, but also in relation to the succession of changes that generate diverse exclusions, affecting large geographic regions and nations, and large urban agglomerations and differentiated social groups, proves to be a way of accelerating exchanges.

This global system informs and includes intellectual, political and economic layers, but it also leads to great exclusions and a marked distancing of the poorest layers of societies, impacts that are aggravated in peripheral countries (Gustin, 2005). This inability to access is based on basic needs and, often, a lack of knowledge about one's own rights, a situation that perpetuates the context of deprivation and violation of basic rights.

As Paulo Freire explains, "To assert that men are people and that, as people, they must be free, but to do nothing to make this statement come true is, without a doubt, a comedy" (Freire, 1980, p. 59), as ownership of rights becomes meaningless in the absence of mechanisms for their effective claim.

Under this premise the main goal of the Legal Pills Project is to promote education and assist in educational processes which involve the society as a whole, providing clarification about rights. The Project is structured and organized to promote access to information that empowers about rights, their existence, their extent, aspects of disrespects and ways of effectiveness. Therefore, the information includes judicial or extrajudicial ways for citizen access to rights, including collective means in order to contribute to full access to justice through rights.

Created in May 2020 the Project was submitted to a Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) extension note undergoing internal evaluation and inclusion in the collective project of the Postgraduate Program in Law at UFMG (Federal University of Minas Gerais, 2024). Once approved, the Project was awarded a scholarship for undergraduate students and postgraduate students, valid for June 2020 to May 2021, a period for which it requested and obtained eight vacancies of volunteer work for students of the Law course, divided into four for undergraduate and four for postgraduate (Federal University of Minas Gerais, 2024). The RECAJ UFMG Program carried out a selection process for scholarship holders and volunteers, through which: a scholarship holder and four volunteers from the postgraduate course in Law, a scholarship holder from the

graduation in Social Communication, and four volunteers from the graduation in Law were selected.

In the following years up to the present date the Project continued to receive each year two annual grants for undergraduate students and a team of volunteers made up of postgraduate students from the course in Law, Psychology and Public Management.

At the beginning, there was the creation of a personalized logo for identification and the mapping of social medias, user profiles/target audience of the action and the format associated with each platform (Orsini et al., 2023).

The initial year of the Project (June 2020 to May 2021) was structured with actions aimed at confronting the pandemic with the most vulnerable part of society, aiming to contribute for the access to justice through rights by informing, disseminating and clarifying legal issues (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024). Recognizing that the state of health calamity was configured as a potentiator of social inequalities and that its effects and consequences cannot be a reason to justify disrespect for Human Rights nor to impede access to rights due to lack of knowledge or misunderstanding regarding the way to exercise them, the Legal Pills Project was structured in its first year to contribute to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, with regard to its legal implications in the daily life of society, promoting actions based on legal information and disclosure to empower professional citizens to know and recognize rights and repair pathways in case of disrespect.

All information and its respective dissemination were designed to be easily understandable, worked in a concise, playful and didactic way, to clarify citizens on legal issues and situations of rights violations, both those amplified and those caused by the impacts of the COVID pandemic, in order to collaborate towards access to justice through rights in the context of the pandemic (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

During the period of health calamity, faced with the intensification of marginalization and other social problems existing in Brazilian society, the themes addressed in the “pills” took into account the need to expand legal knowledge and inform, in a reliable way, the multiple users of social networks from the project. As an example, “pills” were posted on the following topics: increase in domestic violence and sexual exploitation as an effect of the pandemic; vaccination against COVID-19; international cooperation against COVID-19; Fake News; combating child labor; labor relations in the pandemic scenario, among others (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

From June 2020 to May 2021, 98 posts were made on Instagram and Facebook, in addition to posts on Instagram stories and live presentations about the extension action, broadcast on Instagram and YouTube on September 29, 2020 (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024). Regarding the reach

and engagement of shared content, it is observed that, at the end of the period between June 2020 and May 2021, Instagram content was routinely delivered to around 1085 followers and Facebook posts to approximately 1200 followers (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

The health calamity situation, experienced around the world, progressively eased, given advances in vaccination, a circumstance that resulted in gradual adaptations throughout the Project's execution. In this way, the remote extension model initially adopted gave way to a hybrid extension, marked by the combination of remote actions, with the use of different technologies to carry out extension activities and communication between Project members, and face-to-face meetings in 2021 (Orsini et al., 2023).

In the subsequent period from July 2021, the central object of analysis in this article, the Project was structured with actions on Instagram aimed at promoting the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda (July 2021 to February 2022) and the calendar of Human Rights, referring to commemorative dates relevant to the theme from the historical, social, cultural or political point of view of the country (from July 2021 onwards) (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the Member States of the United Nations (UN), is made up of 17 (seventeen) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which must be implemented by all countries in the world by 2030 in order to promote inclusive and sustainable development.

The Human Rights Calendar concerns commemorative dates that are relevant from the country's historical, social, cultural or political point of view. Many of the time frames discussed in the posts address issues linked to social minorities or persistent ills in our society, encouraging an essential debate about inequalities, marginalization and the urgency of transforming the order now established. LGBTQIAP+ pride day, the fight against human trafficking and the struggle of indigenous peoples are examples of posts guided by this premise of explaining content linked to rights.

From July 2021 to February 2022 the focus of actions was on the SDGs, a period permeated by pills on the theme of Human Rights according to commemorative dates, so that the themes were addressed concomitantly. Subsequently, the actions continued with a focus on Human Rights, which remains until the present date (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

The Project central method of action is through the elaboration of contents in the form of “pills” to be disclosed in the profile of the RECAJ UFMG Program on Instagram (“@recajufmg”) to promote the clarification of citizens on legal issues in the themes worked on. The pills are forms of disclosure and legal information, carried out in a didactic and accessible way, in which information is divided into small,

concise and clear parts, seeking to reach a greater number of people in a shorter period of time. The methodology of legal pills allows information to be transmitted via technological tools - such as websites, blogs, social networks - and in a clear and objective way (Orsini et al., 2023).

There is continuous dialogue by the team and the regular exchange of materials and information between extensionists by email and WhatsApp, following the team alignment, debates and a survey of confrontation themes. Periodic meetings are also held to access the work plan, plan activities and define assignments.

The methodology of actions is guided by guidelines in favor of effective information, based on research, normative and bibliographical survey, access to pedagogical materials and reliable and grounded data resources for the creation of texts and images for publication in electronic mediums. The extensionists work on the reading and filing the identified materials and data, concomitantly with their participation in discussions in the Project group, a stage in which the content of the legal pill, aimed at the access to justice through rights, is defined (Orsini et al., 2023).

The content is structured in such a way as to present to the target audience, concise, didactic and clear information about rights in order to collaborate for access to justice through rights.

The legal pills are published on a weekly basis, according to a previously structured calendar, with an average of two weekly publications in the official profile of the RECAJ UFMG Program.

From the choice of theme and the research carried out, the elaboration of the texts by the extensionists begins. Production of the images that accompany the posts is done by the extensionists themselves using the CANVAS application and graphic techniques to obtain an attractive, playful, realistic and representative image for the theme. The elaboration of the text and image of each post is done by a pair or trio of extensionists, according to the defined schedule (Orsini et al., 2023).

After producing the text and accompanying image, the contents of the pill are sent to the team, made up of the Project Coordinating Professor and the other extensionists (undergraduate and postgraduate students). Once approved, the content is published on Instagram, using hashtags for engagement and visibility of the published content. Subsequently the team analyzes the number of likes and the general repercussion of the publication, as useful variables for evaluating the effectiveness of the extension action (Orsini et al., 2023).

During the first year, with the theme focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, the Project also carried out the publication of pills on its official profile on Twitter and Facebook, and also had lives about certain themes broadcasted in its Instagram profile.

The activities are carried out by the undergraduate and postgraduate extensionists accompanied by the Project Coordinator Professor especially the definition of the themes, research and sharing of materials. While the elaboration of the text and image of the post occurs by the graduation extensionists under the guidance of postgraduate extensionists, the content produced is jointly analyzed in the manner described above. This methodology provides an integrated and dialogic participation among undergraduates, masters, doctoral students, university community and target audience.

The methodology also relies on the participation of the team in academic and scientific events and on the elaboration of scientific texts for the results publishing. With the promotion of this elaboration by the members of the Project to encourage the continuity of the studies initiated by the participants within the scope of graduation and in postgraduate studies for writing in journals of qualified extracts and participation in quality scientific events.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the period of operation of the Project analyzed in this work, from June 2021 to February 2022, 59 posts were made on Instagram, in addition to posts in stories on Instagram (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

Of these, 25 posts were about actions promoted by the RECAJ UFMG Program and by UFMG, and themes related to the university. The actions carried out by the Project contributed to improve the spaces and opportunities for debates and discussions between undergraduate and postgraduate students, in addition to strengthening the interdisciplinary role of UFMG, with dialogue between students and collaborating with direct actions for participation and publication work in the academic field. We highlight the mobilization in relation to the XII Congress of the RECAJ UFMG Program with the theme "The new technological frontiers of access to justice and fundamental digital rights in a critical perspective", held on November 25 and 26, 2021, in partnership with the Institution of Higher Education SKEMA Business School Brazil, took place in a hybrid format, in person in the auditorium of the partner institution in Belo Horizonte and transmission to the YouTube channel of the RECAJ UFMG Program, with works presented and published in a collection of books, including works by members of the Legal Pills Project (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

On the other hand, 16 posts were on Human Rights issues, which dealt with topics particularly relevant to the Brazilian context – such as childhood vaccination and the consideration of care for retirement purposes – and commemorative dates: International Day of Black, Latino and Caribbean Women; World Day Against Human Trafficking; International Day of Indigenous People; International Human Rights Day; National Day of Struggle for Homeless People; Amazon Day; National Culture Day; Black

Conscience Day; World AIDS Day; Day for the Visibility of Transvestites and Transsexuals; and National Day for the Struggle of Indigenous People (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

18 posts were specific about the SDGs, in the sense of presenting the objectives and related clarifications, in addition to the Instagram Stories posts on the topic. These posts on the theme of the SDGs will be analyzed later (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

The themes related to the SDGs and Human Rights were developed using the methodology described, in order to effect a dialogical, constructive and transformative interaction between the academic community and other sectors of society, especially those reached by legal pills, through exchange and construction of knowledge aimed at realizing rights and social development.

Regarding the reach and engagement results of shared content it is observed that at the end of the period between June 2020 and May 2021 Instagram content was delivered to 1085 followers. It is noteworthy that from December 2020 to May 2021, the Instagram account “@recajufmg” received more than 100 new followers, pointing to the acceptance of legal pills by the public. Between May 2021 and April 2022, the number of followers on Instagram went from 1085 to 1317, corresponding to an increase of about 21% in a period of almost one year (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

The growth of these numbers expresses the positive impact of the actions carried out, favoring the fulfillment of the Project’s objectives of providing quality information to the community.

About the 18 posts made specifically in addressing the SDGs, it was an introductory post presenting the 2030 Agenda and the Goals and also a post for each one of the 17 SDGs (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

The inaugural posting of the SDGs took place on 2021 July 9 and clarified that they were formulated in 2015 as a goal of the 2030 Agenda established by the UN whose purpose is to guide humanity for the coming years until the appointed date, in the case of 17 Goals integrated with each other and, therefore, indivisible, imperative that they all be worked on in order to progress simultaneously supported by the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely: social, economic and environmental. Turning to the Project’s target audience, the post also informed that the 2030 Agenda is developed in Brazil through the National Commission for the SDGs, which was created by Decree No. 8892, of October 27, 2016, so that political leaders, authorities, organized civil society and the private sector corroborate the practical application of the 17 SDGs.

The SDGs were then launched with the statement that the RECAJ UFMG Program, through the Legal Pills Project, given the importance of the 2030 Agenda, would promote a series of posts in the coming weeks with the aim

of categorically explaining each of the 17 SDGs, always emphasizing its main points in order to bring information to the entire academic community and external public. The inaugural post had 60 interactions (41 likes, 10 shares, 6 saves and 3 comments) and 379 accounts reached (340 followers and 39 non-followers) (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

In the following weeks, two weekly posts followed, one specifically presenting one of the SDGs and the other on the topic of Human Rights or university actions. That way each week a new SDG was addressed.

SDG posts achieved interactions in likes, shares, saves and comments on average of 24 for each post. It is noteworthy that SDG 4 of Quality Education reached the highest number of interactions, with 52 interactions, followed by SDG 2 of Zero Hunger and Sustainable Agriculture with 43 interactions, and SDG 1 of Poverty Eradication with 40 interactions (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

Over the weeks of approaching the SDGs an average of 232 Instagram accounts were reached per post, including followers and non-followers. The greatest reach was achieved by SDG 1 of Eradicating Poverty, with 355 accounts reached (338 followers and 17 non-followers), followed by SDG 2 of Zero Hunger and Sustainable Agriculture, with 315 accounts reached (265 followers and 50 non-followers) and of SDG 4 of Quality Education, with 314 accounts reached (288 followers and 26 non-followers) (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

In addition to the posts on the Instagram feed, there was the publication of stories with interactive content on some topics in order to associate clear and accessible information with fun and participatory channels for the user of the social network in contact with the Project (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

Specifically on the SDG theme these posts involved the use of a quiz with questions on the SDG theme to test the user’s knowledge, used in SDG 1 of Eradicating Poverty (115 accounts achieved) and SDG 2 of Zero Hunger and Sustainable Agriculture (66 accounts reached). The “true or false” question feature was also used as stories, in which the public could indicate whether the statement released was true, used in SDG 3 of Health and Well-being (195 accounts reached), in SDG 4 of Education Quality (61 accounts achieved) and on SDG 6 of Drinking Water (64 accounts achieved). In SDG 5 on Gender Equality, both features were adopted together, with 74 accounts achieved. In this context the stories with the highest number of interactions were from SDG 3 on Health and Well-being, with 58 interactions (RECAJ UFMG Program, 2024).

In this way the actions of the Legal Pills Project promoted information based on education and empowerment of the population, relying on active social networks, which until now periodically disseminate technical and scientifically

based information for the effectiveness of access to justice through the rights (Orsini et al., 2023).

Higher Education Institutions and especially universities are local and regional protagonists – and sometimes also national and international – in the most diverse areas and forms of action, which include research, teaching, extension, construction and dissemination of scientific knowledge and professional training, being well positioned to connect knowledge to the realities of local communities (Instituto Internacional de la UNESCO para la Educación Superior en América Latina y el Caribe, 2020).

For this reason, the protagonism of the university's action can promote a catalytic effect, generating impact and influence in the formulation of public policies and in the dissemination of knowledge, aiming at creating a favorable environment for action at the level in the trajectory of citizens.

The SDGs will serve as a platform for action by the international community and national governments to promote common prosperity and well-being for all and should guide national policies and international cooperation activities in the coming years. For its implementation, national, regional and local governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, academia and citizens must be involved, mobilized to implement and monitor the SDGs.

In this context, Higher Education Institutions and, especially, universities have a potential role in contributing to achieving the SDGs through professional training, research, investigation and extension. Understanding its potential and reach, the actions developed in university policies and in the areas of teaching, research and extension collaborate to make the SDGs a reality in cities, regions and, ultimately, in countries and around the world.

As Adolfo Ignacio Calderón (2011) analyzes, extension constitutes an academic practice that generates knowledge and citizen experience for the extensionist, collaborating to train competent professionals and citizens with the ability to understand and intervene critically and ethically in the problems of their time, but also contributes to articulating and enhancing the forces of society, cooperating, complementing, strengthening, enhancing and improving the initiatives of public power, civil society and the market, as well as for the dialogue between the actors that are part of each of them.

The author Calderón (2011, p. 27-28) clarifies that “university extension constitutes an educational, social, cultural and scientific principle that contributes to HEIs [Higher Education Institutions] increasingly assuming their formative dimension for citizenship”, performance which creates spaces for not only students and teachers, but also external subjects, to experience and give concrete expression to democratic values that favor respect for Human Rights and the construction of an inclusive, multi-cultural and ecologically balanced society.

At this point, Santos and Almeida Filho (2008) understanding of the role of universities in building social cohesion and deepening democracy and cultural diversity is pertinent. The author states that these goals will be achieved through extension activities of public universities, which must have as a priority objective, democratically supported within the university, solidarity support in resolving the problems of social exclusion and discrimination, in such a way that collaborate in giving a voice to excluded and discriminated groups (Santos & Almeida Filho, 2008).

In the same sense, Orsini and Costa (2010) highlight the intrinsic relationship between the researcher-extensionist and the community in which relevant social interventions are planned to be carried out, through university extension actions. The authors highlight that the historical role of the necessary dialogue between teaching, research and extension is precisely to make the university socially relevant, constituting an instrument that transforms reality.

Thus, dealing with reality through extension, research and teaching is a fundamental experience in the training of the researcher and, especially, of the individual inserted in their social context achieved by that academic practice. About that, “in addition to creating the necessary conditions for planned and responsible action in different social environments, this dialogue guarantees the exchange of knowledge between the university and the community and, also, within the academic reality itself” (Orsini y Costa, 2010, p. 15). The extension developed focuses on issues of relevance in the social context in which the extensionist is inserted and that it is carried out through the use of interactive social networks, which establishes a dialogic path with users.

Extension activity became a driver of a consistent communication of knowledge between the student community and society, allowing future jurists to build a critical and socially engaged consciousness, marked by reflections on interdisciplinary perspectives, dissociated from the academic paradigm usually reflected in colleges of Right of reproduction and mechanical application of normative devices to deal with concrete facts.

The relevant role played by university extension in consolidating a more complete personal and academic training of law students is verified, from the moment in which contact with reality outside the university environment allows the construction of reflective knowledge and the development of crucial dialogic and critical skills for the future worker, dissociating their professional development from the mere expertise in executing legal statements.

Extension, necessarily associated with research, allows the generation of new knowledge, observation of social and institutional realities and the investigation of possible solutions or means for improvement, results that, if implemented, give an effective social function to the knowledge produced. In this context, the university structure provides the student with the experience of autonomy and growth,

gives the institution greater reach as a catalyst for transformation, social influence and academic production and provides society with the reduction of injustices and structural and organizational improvement.

Student education that adds, to the classic conception of access to rights previously restricted to the judicial process or the Justice system, the understanding of the multiplicity of forms of access to justice and the material and historical sources of law, with emphasis on citizenship and the struggles and mobilizations that promote rights, point to the realization of human rights and democratic strengthening not only in the person of the trained student, but also through him, as a professional promoter of them.

University education must enable the formation of conscious citizens, who know, recognize and care about the realization of rights through their actions. The professional resulting from the broad, critical and transdisciplinary educational process is equipped with conditions for information, empowerment and recognition of themselves and others in their performance.

Under this understanding, the structuring of the Project stands out in promoting extension in the Post-Graduation in Law at UFMG and in promoting interaction between students from different courses and levels of education, in addition to structuring itself as an effective extension action in the promotion of access to justice through rights. In addition, the Project's performance contributed directly and significantly to expanding knowledge about the SDG to the public reached by the actions developed, including said knowledge within the university and in relation to professors and students (Orsini et al., 2023). Added to this, the Project inspired the scientific production of articles and other works presented at academic and scientific events.

Particularly noteworthy is the dissemination of legal knowledge to contexts and scenarios outside the university, thus allowing for the promotion of citizenship. Law, as a science that it is, deals with issues related to social dynamics and individual and collective demands; however it is often known by a very small portion of individuals. In this sense, university action through the Project assumes a unique importance in disseminating legal content, so relevant to citizens and thus promoting access to justice, especially from the bias of recognition, in which citizens come to know their own rights and guarantees (Orsini et al., 2023).

The promotion of education with the expansion of access to knowledge enables individuals in a society to think critically and creatively about new solutions for building a more just and democratic environment (Freire, 1996), since information produces empowerment, one of the axes of access to justice through rights (Avritzer et al., 2014). The more the subject reflects on reality, on his concrete situation, be it local, regional, national or international, the greater the possibilities of emerging fully aware,

committed, ready to intervene in reality to transform it in the sense of greater realization of human rights (Costa, 2016).

If access to rights and access to justice in an expanded conception through rights is not guaranteed to society in general, at a more vulnerable socioeconomic context the situation worsens. And the lack of access to the most basic rights accentuates the difficulty of overcoming vulnerability and social exclusion, since it deprives that community of conditions to face the violation of rights and political and social mobilization. On the other hand, knowledge provides conditions for direct social, political and economic participation, as well as for delving into essential issues for social life in the fullness of rights. This also establishes dialogic and problematizing education, as a practice of freedom between people and between communities (Freire, 2005).

It is especially through education that subjects are qualified for local, national or even international transformations necessary for effective and better respect for human rights, as it allows them to know the rights of all, be aware of related duties and train themselves to exercise these rights.

Education is an anthropological, psychological, moral, economic, political and legal primacy, constituting a principle and precondition for the realization of other rights. The community, and more especially the individual, begins to act as a conscious and participating subject in their social environment.

Knowledge about Human Rights and about sustainable development is necessary for their realization, emphasizing that broad and critical education enables the subject to do more than simply adapt to their environment, but a conscious insertion in the world and a possibility of transforming it (Andrade, 2013). Gustin's warning is opportune, in the sense that "An emancipatory pedagogy could make this movement not only for the dissemination of knowledge of these rights, but also for their effective guarantee for all social strata" (2005, p. 27).

The empowered individual, aware of his human and citizenship condition and aware of his reality, both regarding the rights and guarantees he has and about ways to cope with their deprivation, proves to be an impulse to transform his life project and the collective project surrounds him (Orsini et al., 2018). Having a culture of rights that informs the existence and requirement creates an atmosphere favorable to their respect, because despite the simple knowledge of rights does not guarantee their observance and respect, it helps people to mobilize in this sense.

Throughout the process presented the Project promoted the enrichment of the education and training of the undergraduate and postgraduate students involved, notably in the SDG theme, understanding that education will have a positive performance when it provides the real

development of students and when society benefits from the fruits of the knowledge produced, generating relevant changes and contributing to the improvement of the social body (Freire, 1996). This positive action occurs as institutions turn to social and institutional development and to the scenario they comprise, in the sense of projecting the necessary transformations and being concerned with the social group of which they are a part.

University performance in research and extension, which is necessarily associated with research, and both permeated by teaching, allows the generation of new knowledge, observation of social and institutional realities and the investigation of possible solutions or means for improvement, results that, if implemented, they confer an effective social function on the knowledge produced.

The interaction between the different levels of higher education marked the Project's actions and contributed to the improvement of each student involved. Extension activities provide an environment conducive to learning and questioning, resulting in rich experiences of research and social intervention (Orsini y Costa, 2010).

Based on these assumptions, the RECAJ UFMG Program, in its extension actions, integrates postgraduate students into the activities developed, as occurs in the Legal Pills Project, as a way of promoting and intensifying dialogue between postgraduate and graduation university students. The edict that marked the creation of the Project, by establishing this integration as a parameter for action, strengthened the mobilization of students at both levels, which is continually reflected not only in extension actions, but in teaching and research activities linked to the Program.

Freire (1996) clarifies that the teaching process must be dialogical and integral, as students and teachers introduce knowledge that complements each other to build deep and complete knowledge. From this perspective, an emancipatory transformation of students is made possible, which reflects on society as a whole, through innovation, experience, discovery and the resulting social intervention.

Education – for the extension worker and the target audience – is structured on the formation of the subject to deal with the complexity and challenges of a society theoretically subject to a democratic order, but whose reality is marked by inequalities, which requires promoting critical awareness that consider the aspiration for equality as well as respect for difference and the effective space for dialogue and participation (Freire, 2005).

Therefore, education will only be effective when in a comprehensive, transformative and emancipatory sense, in realizing intersubjectivity, in learning to coexist, with permanent critical judgment of a given social environment and its values, notably in the face of social complexity.

The importance of education is verified not only as a means of training professionals and providing the possibility of a broad life project, but, mainly, as an instrument that transforms the student and his reality, which enables him to take a critical role in the civic space, strengthening the exercise of citizenship and characterized as an important tool for social emancipation, especially if education is considered in the reality where inequality, the invisibilization of subjects and the excluded are present (Santos, 2013). In this context, education presents itself and stands out as a channel for the realization and defense of human rights.

The education promoted proves to be an essential element for the creation of a democratic and fair society. In this way, there is a process through which the subject becomes aware of being – or being able to be – an active figure in social life, in participating and preparing measures and decisions that affect their own life (Costa, 2016).

It is noteworthy that the actions of the Legal Pills Project continue in the RECAJ UFMG Program, continuing in the expanded treatment of the theme of Human Rights.

CONCLUSIONS

The university structure based on teaching, research and extension, together, provides the student with the experience of autonomy and growth, gives the institution a greater catalyzing reach of transformations, social influence and academic production, and provides society with the reduction of injustices and structural and organizational improvement. Understanding the relevance of higher education not only for professional training, but also for research, generation and dissemination of knowledge that promotes social, economic and structural transformation, the importance of its performance in achieving the SDGs is highlighted.

In this way, it appears that the scope of the Project goes beyond the relevant educational repercussions on society, starting to encompass extension agents, as they develop in professional and humanistic terms. The Legal Pills Project allowed, through research, meetings, “pills” and published works, to provide participating students and users/target audience with training in legal topics relevant to everyday issues and promote knowledge and empowerment for full exercise of rights.

Regarding research and university extension activities, experiences developed by UFMG, adding different areas of knowledge shows evidences of the possibility of integrating the SDGs in these areas of university action. Understanding that knowledge and information are means of empowerment and a necessary channel for access to justice through rights, the experience carried out by the Legal Pills Project at UFMG revealed the potential for promoting knowledge of the SDGs as a way to facilitate their implementation.

As the SDGs are integrated and indivisible objectives, it is envisaged that the expansion and citizen access to grounded information on each one of them is established in the sense of expanded achievement of the SDGs. Higher Education Institutions therefore have a crucial role in achieving the SDGs, especially through their work in generating and disseminating knowledge and their promising situation in society.

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