LUMEN ET VIRTUS

# Entrepreneurship as a transformative strategy for women in situations of domestic and family violence

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## ABSTRACT

Domestic and family violence is a scourge that goes beyond physical and emotional trauma. Faced with this challenge, entrepreneurship emerges as an essential strategy for coping with and empowering women in this condition. This study investigates the effectiveness of entrepreneurship as an alternative for overcoming and empowering women assisted by the Caravan of Workshops project, promoted by the Court of Justice of the State of Amapá (TJAP). This project is aligned with the "Transformation" Program, instituted by the National Council of Justice (CNJ). The research used the life history technique, with a qualitative approach of exploratory and descriptive typology, in addition to extensive direct observation, to collect data from the stories of these women. The results show that, by receiving training for entrepreneurship, women became more empowered, achieving financial independence and their own income. However, the findings also highlight that, in addition to offering training opportunities through workshops focused on entrepreneurship, the courts and other institutions responsible for these programs should implement protective measures and monitor cases closely, ensuring that the new situation of autonomy is consolidated in the family environment. For public managers, this study offers valuable insights for the formulation of more assertive public policies in the fight against domestic and family violence, based on a detailed analysis of the experiences of women in situations of social vulnerability.

**Keywords:** Domestic Violence, Entrepreneurship, Empowerment.

## INTRODUCTION

The vulnerability to which women are exposed in society demands urgent and careful attention, especially with regard to domestic and family violence. Living with this problem results in an environment of oppression, silence, submission and fear, which makes it difficult to access help.

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According to the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights (MMFDH), in 2022, the call center registered approximately 31,398 complaints and 169,676 violations related to domestic violence against women. This reality is alarming both in Brazil and globally, and the State of Amapá also reflects this worrying situation. In 2022, the report by the Public Prosecutor's Office revealed about 2,342 cases of domestic violence against women in the state.

As a strategy to face this scenario, the importance of the Transformation Program, instituted by the National Judiciary through Resolution No. 497/2023 of the CNJ, and the projects linked to it, such as the Caravan of Workshops Project, developed by the Court of Justice of Amapá, whose purpose aims to qualify and professionalize women victims of domestic and family violence, training them for the job market.

In this context, this study investigates the effectiveness of entrepreneurship as an alternative for overcoming and empowering women assisted by the Caravan of Workshops project, promoted by the Court of Justice of the State of Amapá.

The theoretical framework of this study is divided into three subsections: the first contextualizes entrepreneurship; the second addresses the reality of domestic violence and its consequences; and the third presents entrepreneurship as a form of empowerment in light of Resolution No. 497/2023 of the CNJ.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Although the study of entrepreneurship has a relatively short trajectory in history, entrepreneurial activity probably coincides with human existence itself. In Brazil, the entrepreneurial movement became more prominent from the 1990s onwards, with the opening of the economy to the international market, the privatization of state-owned companies, the increase in unemployment and other relevant changes (RUIZ, 2019).

Initially, the concept of entrepreneurship refers to individuals who identify or create opportunities and, based on them, develop economic activities in an organized way, contributing to society (FONTANA; THIMÓTEO, 2020).

Alves (2021) defines entrepreneurship as a set of initiatives based on the intellectual capital and creativity of the entrepreneur, with the objective of transforming ideas, products, or services into economic value. In turn, Dolabela (2010) considers entrepreneurship as the ability to identify opportunities at the right time, make decisions and take risks in the creation and development of innovative businesses or projects, emphasizing that entrepreneurial activity involves numerous challenges.

Within the scope of this research, female entrepreneurship is a prominent theme, essential for the construction of a more just and egalitarian society. It offers opportunities and generates positive impacts on the local economy (SILVA et al., 2019).

Women's struggle for equity, especially in the male-dominated labor market, is historic. It is worth noting that, despite often reconciling double shifts and various responsibilities, women have not always been recognized for their entrepreneurial merit (PROGRAMA CENTELHA, 2021).

In 2019, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) revealed important data on entrepreneurship in Brazil, with a rate of 38.7%, which corresponds to more than 53 million people aged between 18 and 64 who undertook in the country. It is noteworthy that, of this total, 50% are women who, facing difficulties or taking advantage of financial opportunities, managed to develop economic activities.

Currently, female entrepreneurship is recognized as a crucial and necessary activity in the post-pandemic world, which has not only slowed down several sectors of the economy, but also widened inequalities, including in the field of business (SEBRAE-PA, 2023).

## Challenges of female entrepreneurship

According to the National Confederation of Shopkeepers (CNDL), female entrepreneurship in Brazil is on the rise, with the country occupying seventh place in the world ranking. The 2022 "Management and Challenges of Women Entrepreneurs" survey revealed that there are about 30 million Brazilian entrepreneurs, driven by the search for financial independence and professional growth.

In general, entrepreneurs seek freedom when opening their businesses, while women in Brazil often do so out of necessity, aiming to supplement their income or achieve financial independence, since they are often the main responsible for supporting the family (SEBRAE, 2023).

Despite the impressive numbers, women entrepreneurs face several challenges, such as low revenue, informality, lack of knowledge in technologies, double shifts, and difficulties in accessing credit (CNDL, 2023). According to Sebrae – PA (2023), the main obstacles include difficult access to credit lines, with higher interest rates for women, the need for greater flexibility due to maternity, exhausting working hours due to the accumulation of domestic and business functions, wage inequality, and situations of harassment, embarrassment, and discrimination.

On the other hand, some of these obstacles are beginning to be addressed through legislative initiatives. Law No. 14,667, sanctioned on September 4, 2023, established the National Week of Women's Entrepreneurship. In addition, there are important bills in progress in the National Congress, such as PL 31/2021, which proposes the creation of the MEI specific for women

entrepreneurs, and PL 1883/2021, which aims to facilitate access to credit for micro and small businesses led by women.

Thus, female entrepreneurship has been consolidated as a crucial empowerment tool for women. However, many challenges remain, including domestic and family violence, which will be addressed in the next section.

## DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

According to the National Confederation of Shopkeepers (CNDL), female entrepreneurship in Brazil is expanding, with the country occupying seventh place in the world ranking. The 2022 "Management and Challenges of Women Entrepreneurs" survey revealed that there are approximately 30 million Brazilian entrepreneurs, motivated by the search for financial independence and professional growth.

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However, some of these challenges are being addressed through legislative initiatives. Law No. 14,667, sanctioned on September 4, 2023, created the National Week of Women's Entrepreneurship. In addition, there are important bills in progress in the National Congress, such as PL 31/2021, which proposes the creation of the MEI specific for women entrepreneurs, and PL 1883/2021, which seeks to facilitate access to credit for micro and small businesses led by women.

Therefore, female entrepreneurship has asserted itself as a crucial empowerment tool for women. However, there are still many challenges, including domestic and family violence, which will be explored in the next section.

Analyzing this scope of domestic violence against women, Rapousa (2022, p. 12) understands that:

> There is inequality between men and women in our contemporary society, and it is clear that it still haunts a large public since the violation of women's rights occurs all over the world, regardless of age, ethnicity, race or creed.

Rapousa (2022) describes that moral violence is that which offends a woman's honor, falsely imputing to her a crime, a fact that damages her reputation, or her dignity and decorum. Sexual violence, in turn, is characterized by acts such as forcing the woman to have sexual relations with people in her life or strangers, forcing her to witness sexual relations with others, or even blackmailing and bribing the victim (RAPOUSA, 2022).

According to Rapousa (2022), physical violence refers to damage to bodily integrity, such as pushing, slapping, biting, burning, and cutting. This type of violence usually occurs in the victim's home, and the aggressor is often someone with whom she has a social and affective bond.

Psychological violence, on the other hand, involves the imposition of a condition of subservience of the woman to the man. This manifests itself in the use of offensive words, the refusal of affection, and other actions that emotionally affect the partner (RAPOUSA, 2022).

As for the form of patrimonial violence, the concept is provided for in article 7, item IV, of the Maria da Penha Law, and can be defined as:

> [...] any conduct that constitutes retention, subtraction, partial or total destruction of their objects, work instruments, personal documents, goods, values and rights or economic resources, including those intended to satisfy their needs (BRASIL, 2006, s.p.).

Property violence is associated with three main behaviors: subtracting, destroying, and retaining. Subtraction refers to the act of a spouse or partner removing values or assets that belong to the woman, or that belonged to her, such as her share of the common assets. This can include the disposal of automobiles, house furniture, or even pets. In addition, the theft may occur simply with the objective of causing discomfort to the partner, disregarding the value of the stolen asset (MENDES; JUNIOR, 2021, p. 7).

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS EMPOWERMENT IN LIGHT OF CNJ RESOLUTION NO. 497/2023

Based on the foundations of the Federative Republic of Brazil and on the principles of human dignity, citizenship and the social value of work, which are essential for the reduction of social disparities and the promotion of the well-being of all, without any form of prejudice as to origin, race, gender identity, color, age or other forms of discrimination established in the Federal Constitution of 1988, The existence of differences between men and women is recognized. However, it is reaffirmed that gender should not be used as a criterion for discrimination.

In this perspective, considering that it is the duty of the public authorities to develop policies that guarantee the fundamental rights of women in domestic and family relationships, protecting them against practices of discrimination, exploitation, violence, cruelty, and oppression, according to article 3, paragraph 1, of Law No. 11,340/2006 (Maria da Penha Law), the National Council of

Justice, through Resolution No. 497/2023, creates mechanisms to curb and prevent domestic and family violence against women:

> Establish, within the scope of the National Judiciary – with the exception of the Federal Supreme Court – the "Transformation" Program, on a national and permanent basis and with a continuous flow, which is now regulated by this resolution, and which aims to encourage the adoption of affirmative policies that enable the reduction of inequalities and social inclusion in the labor market of women members of vulnerable groups.

In the face of the new challenges surrounding female participation in the economy, there is a growing involvement of women in entrepreneurship. However, this participation does not always translate into a formalized professional action and often lacks management experience, which can hinder empowerment and future growth.

Research carried out by the IBGE (2004) and the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA, 2004) indicate that advances in the educational field can increase the participation of women in the professional market. However, these improvements need to be accompanied by economic viability to generate significant results.

Empowering women who are victims of domestic and family violence is crucial to transform relationships of inequality and social oppression. This empowerment goes beyond simple access to income; It includes obtaining decent work, fair wages, access to social security, adequate conditions of production and marketing, and the right to leisure. Samuel (2014) states that empowering a woman is to rescue her self-esteem and personal satisfaction.

The development of economic activities outside the family environment provides autonomy to women, unlike domestic tasks that impose routine practices. Entrepreneurship offers a new social dynamic, giving women more confidence and prestige in society. Women demonstrate a remarkable capacity for persuasion and care for customers and suppliers, characteristics that favor the progress of companies and strengthen the bonds between the entrepreneur and her network (AMORIM; BATISTA, 2016).

In the context of female empowerment, the economic factor allows women to participate in the family economy and have a voice. Psychologically, it contributes to self-confidence and well-being, in addition to achieving professional success and making dreams come true. In the educational aspect, the level of education influences performance in entrepreneurship. In the family environment, family recognition and support, participation in decisions and getting out of the cycle of violence and dependence are crucial aspects.

The program for the empowerment of women victims of domestic and family violence, based on Resolution No. 497/2023 of the CNJ, is of great social importance. The program aims to recruit heads of families in vulnerable situations, seeking financial independence and therapeutic ways to get out of the cycle of violence. Its objective is to offer professional training to qualify,

professionalize, improve and update women, promoting their insertion in the labor market and social inclusion, in addition to strengthening the local culture.

Although female entrepreneurship has gradually evolved, it is evident that this phenomenon has gained prominence not only in Brazil, but around the world. The study of women entrepreneurs has become a relevant topic at international conferences (GOUVÊA; SCOTT; MACHADO, 2013).

## METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This study is characterized as an exploratory research with a qualitative approach, which aims to describe, understand and interpret the facts and phenomena related to the central theme (MESQUITA et al., 2014). According to Gil (2002), exploratory research is useful to deepen the understanding of the problem, make the questions more explicit and build hypotheses, considering the bibliographic survey and the context of the problem, in addition to conducting interviews to collect qualitative data.

The research used qualitative methods to collect information, covering opinions, perceptions and experiences. The interviews were conducted following strict ethical principles, such as the appropriate choice of participants, the interviewer, the place, the manner and time of the interviews (BATISTA et al., 2017). In addition, extensive direct observation was employed, using the life history technique to obtain data on the "ultimate experience" of individuals relevant to the study (LAKATOS; MARCONI, 2003).

The empirical context of this article occurred in the Municipality of Macapá/AP, where the selection of participants focused on the female gender, especially women victims of domestic and family violence assisted by the Caravan of Workshops project, developed by the Court of Justice of Amapá. The participants participated in crochet, biscuit, bows, self-defense and organization workshops. 10 women were interviewed among the 63 assisted in the municipality of Macapá in August 2023. Fictitious names were used for the participants in the interviews, in order to protect their identity.

The data collection process allows us to explore subjective and personal aspects of the participants and to analyze the collective dimensions of the relationships established within the social groups to which they belong or belonged (DUARTE, 2004). To support the discussion, Chart 1 presents the dimensions of analysis of this study, aligned with the theoretical foundation.

Chart 1 - Dimensions of analysis based on theory.

| Dimensions | Attributes | Sources |
|---|---|---|
| Female entrepreneurship | History, entrepreneurship, economy | Ruiz (2019) |
| | Opportunities, economic activity, entrepreneurship | Fontana and Thimóteo (2020) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Entrepreneurship, intellectual capital, creativity | Alves (2021) |
| | Opportunity, creation, business | Dolabela (2010) |
| | Initiative, organization, transform resources | Alexandrino (2022) |
| | Female entrepreneurship, post-pandemic world, ventures | Sebrae-PA (2023) |
| | Women, entrepreneurship, discrimination | Almeida (2011) |
| | Legal mechanisms, National Congress, female entrepreneurship | National Congress (2024) |
| | Women, needs, financial independence | Sebrae (2023) |
| | Motivations, personal needs, entrepreneurial activity | Chiavenato (2007) |
| Domestic and family violence | Approval of the Maria da Penha Law | Pasinato (2010) |
| | Dimensions of coping: combat, protection and prevention | Almeida and Ferreira (2021) |
| | Moral and psychological violence | Rapousa (2022) |
| | Physical and sexual violence | Rapousa (2022) |
| | Property violence | Mendes and Junior (2021) |
| Entrepreneurship as Empowerment | Transformation Program | Resolution No. 497/2023 CNJ |
| | Entrepreneurship and Financial Independence | Samuel (2014) |
| | Empowerment projects, inclusion in the labor market | Gouvêa, Silveira and Machado (2013) |

Source: Prepared by the authors (2024).

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

### CNJ RESOLUTION NO. 497/2023 AND ITS APPLICABILITY IN THE STATE OF AMAPÁ

The educational process is a continuous learning journey, which encompasses the transmission of knowledge, the development of skills, and the formation of values. This journey can lead to liberating practices in many ways, with the potential to empower the female audience and transform lives.

The project, by focusing on entrepreneurship, offers assisted women the opportunity to build a career that enables personal growth, the recovery of their citizenship and the exercise of their rights and responsibilities, reintegrating them into social life.

These actions are specifically aimed at women in vulnerable situations, as they face greater difficulties in reversing their situation and seeking financial autonomy. These difficulties are often related to low self-esteem, the role of family caregiver, level of education, lack of time and difficulties in commuting.

The need for a concentrated action plan is justified by the observance of the guidelines of the National Council of Justice (CNJ). The plan reflects the commitment of the TJAP State Women's Coordination to break with the stigmas associated with female vulnerability, which often lead to the

practice of various forms of violence, whether in the family environment, at work, in public agencies or in society.

The challenges identified include limited access to resources in some areas, the logistical complexity of serving several municipalities, the need for effective engagement of women victims of violence, individual barriers such as lack of time and initial resistance, and cultural adaptation in some communities.

The methodology of the action plan of the workshops, developed by the State Coordination of Domestic and Family Violence (CEVID/TJAP), is structured in three phases:

1. Access:
   - Prior meetings with partner agencies and workshops.
   - Issuance of official letters to enable the execution of events.
   - Availability of spaces in partner institutions for course activities.
   - Preliminary Technical Study (ETP) to make the budget viable.
   - Selection and registration of candidates, with the support of partner entities, such as the Women's Service Network (RAM).
   - Meeting with the team to pass on information about the execution of the workshops and the methodology used.
   - Dissemination of the actions on TJAP's social networks.
2. Permanence:
   - Presentation of the methodology to be used in the workshops.
   - Identification of innovative processes that enable learning for business generation.
   - Holding seminars and/or lectures complementary to the workshops, when possible.
3. Success:
   - Identification of innovative processes, products and services for income and business generation.
   - Contribution to the success of women through articulation with the productive sector for insertion in the labor market and exploration of possibilities for continuity of professional training.
   - Presentation of alternatives for entering the labor market, such as own entrepreneurial initiatives, formation of cooperatives, associations or solidarity economy groups.
   - Orientation of the participants to increase their education, with partnerships with state, municipal and federal educational institutions.

The commitment to positive change reflects CEVID/TJAP's ongoing effort to create a more just and equitable future, where every woman can rewrite her story and contribute meaningfully to society.

In summary, the program outlined by CNJ Resolution No. 497/2023 is a viable initiative that recognizes education and entrepreneurship as powerful tools for social transformation. By focusing on women who are victims of domestic and family violence, the program not only provides professional training, but also promotes the restoration of dignity and financial autonomy of the women assisted. A case report shows the experiences of the project participants:

> "Trying to find a way out, I looked for handicrafts, I wanted to undertake, I wanted to get out of that circle of violence. I was welcomed by the RAM network (Women's Service Network), I took courses, I improved myself and I got to know the project of the Women's Coordination – TJAP. I started to be part of the caravan of Workshop Workers who take the TJAP handicraft courses. I was more in control of my life and I was already able to have an income.
> In the last action, my husband was very angry about having to travel to other municipalities that would be our next place to apply the workshops. On my return I was assaulted by him, he tried to turn my daughter against me, I was kicked out of the house. Welcomed by the women's coordinator, who took all the steps to solve my case, I have a protective measure, the women's service network accompanying me and helping me.
> I'm Maria dos Anjos, 43 years old, artisan, I have a daughter, I was married for 19 years and lived in an abusive relationship for 14 years. Today entrepreneurship and my life have taken me out of physical, patrimonial and psychological violence."

## FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE PROJECT

Given its social importance and with the objective of training and empowering the women assisted, the actions proposed by the program promoted by Resolution No. 497/2023 of the CNJ are continuous and require constant institutional efforts. The purpose is to strengthen female protagonism in the construction of a more egalitarian, supportive, entrepreneurial and sustainable society.

The program aims to expand its actions to other municipalities, county seats or Outposts of State Justice, offering opportunities for training and socioeconomic emancipation for women victims of domestic and family violence. To this end, the plan includes training actions, insertion in the labor market, approximation with partner companies and universities, with a focus on entrepreneurial guidance and welcoming.

Women who are victims of domestic and family violence, recruited by the agencies of the care network, who are heads of families in vulnerable situations and seek financial independence and therapeutic ways to get out of the cycle of violence, participate. The continuity of the workshops will involve expenses with materials, transportation, food and accommodation for the participants.

The Empodera Mulher Program, a partnership between the State Government and the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Amapá (IFAP), also stands out.

This program offers 540 vacancies for courses in Production Planning, Programming and Control Assistance and Individual Microentrepreneur.

In addition to providing training and welcoming, the program aims to explore the creative and entrepreneurial qualities of women, facilitating access to the labor market, promoting financial autonomy, and contributing to the reduction of vulnerability in abusive relationships.

The project's actions aim to provide the sheltered women with qualification opportunities that increase their chances of entering the labor market and allow them to make decisions about their new life, analyzing the available job opportunities.

The proposal of Resolution 497/2023 – CNJ is justified by the need to provide education and training for women in situations of social vulnerability, many of whom are victims of domestic violence. Samuel (2014) highlights that empowering a woman is rescuing her self-esteem and personal satisfaction. In this context, the training program of the workshops offers a crucial opportunity to restore dignity and promote women's financial autonomy, in line with the understanding that education and training are fundamental for women's emancipation (GOUVÊA; SCOTT; MACHADO, 2013).

Among the difficulties pointed out by the group, the difficulty in obtaining financial resources and credit to expand its business stands out. Almost all respondents mentioned high interest rates as one of the main barriers imposed by banks, a concern that is corroborated by the research by Mendes and Junior (2021), which discusses how financial obstacles and lack of credit are persistent challenges for women entrepreneurs in Brazil.

In terms of future prospects, the government is committed to developing actions that promote the inclusion of these women in the labor market and the search for financial autonomy. The objective is to expand the program to all municipalities in the state, providing opportunities for training and socioeconomic emancipation to women in vulnerable situations. Duarte (2004) argues that the empirical approach and the collection of qualitative data are essential to understand and solve the dynamics of vulnerability and empowerment, which reinforces the importance of the methodology adopted by the program.

In summary, the demand of the project is compatible with the identified needs, meeting the legal requirements and guidelines established by the resolution, and is adequate to the existing limits in the public administration.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research presented aimed to analyze female entrepreneurship promoted by the workshop project of the Court of Justice of Amapá, in alignment with Resolution No. 497/2023 – CNJ, which establishes the "Transformation" Program for women victims of domestic and family violence. The

study emphasizes both the achievements brought by entrepreneurship and the challenges faced by these entrepreneurs.

The project aims to assist women in vulnerable situations due to domestic and family violence, offering support through entrepreneurship to rescue, qualify and empower these women. The analysis of the characteristics of the assisted women reveals that most of them are between 30 and 45 years old, come from troubled marital relationships and have a varied level of education, with a predominance of incomplete elementary school. These data are in line with what was discussed by Rapousa (2022), who describes the moral, physical, sexual, and psychological violence faced by these women and how such experiences impact their ability to undertake.

The article offers significant contributions by revealing an entrepreneurial reality that is transforming lives through opportunities in female entrepreneurship, rescuing and empowering women affected by social problems. Amorim and Batista's (2016) view of women's ability to create strong bonds and concern for customers and suppliers is evidenced by the successes of women who have overcome barriers and generated a positive impact on their communities. This study has great relevance for the academic environment, especially for Law and Administration courses.

Despite the prejudices and barriers faced, many women have already overcome these obstacles and achieved success at the head of various ventures, showing that female entrepreneurship is a crucial activity for personal and professional growth. The long-term perspective reflects a commitment to social transformation, aligning with the vision on the need for inclusion strategies and ongoing support to overcome challenges and promote equity.

This approach incorporates the contributions of the aforementioned authors, highlighting how their research and theories relate to the goals and challenges of the women's entrepreneurship program.

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