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**CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS
IN BRAZIL**

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“What business entrepreneurs are to the economy, social entrepreneurs are to social change. They are the driven, creative individuals who question the status quo, exploit new opportunities, refuse to give up, and remake the world for the better.”

(David Bornstein)

Abstract

This Trabalho de Conclusão offers an in-depth analysis of the challenges faced by women social entrepreneurs in Brazil, integrating a literary review of the history of feminism and the symbolic representation of women, with an empirical study highlighting the experiences of five Brazilian women social entrepreneurs. The literary review explores the evolution of feminism in Brazil and traditional gender roles in society, providing a context for understanding the systemic obstacles faced by female social entrepreneurs. At the same time, an analysis of the symbolic representation of women examines cultural influences on entrepreneurial perspectives.

Complementing the literary analysis, this study incorporates an in-depth qualitative analysis of five Brazilian female social entrepreneurs. Semi-structured interviews provide rich data on their experiences, challenges, and coping strategies. The results reveal common themes such as financial barriers, persistent gender bias, but also a determination to bring about positive change in their communities.

This combined approach links the findings of the literary analysis with real-life testimonials, enhancing understanding of the complex issues facing women in social entrepreneurship. The recommendations arising from this research provide insights for public policy, support organizations, and future entrepreneurs, with a view to fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment for women social entrepreneurs in Brazil. This dissertation thus contributes to both academic research and concrete actions to promote women's economic empowerment in the Brazilian context.

Key-words : Social entrepreneurship, Social Innovation, women empowerment, female social entrepreneur, feminism, challenges

Resumo

Este Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso oferece uma análise aprofundada dos desafios enfrentados pelas mulheres empreendedoras sociais no Brasil, integrando uma revisão literária da história do feminismo e da representação simbólica da mulher, com um estudo empírico que destaca as experiências de cinco mulheres empreendedoras brasileiras. A revisão literária explora a evolução do feminismo no Brasil e os papéis tradicionais de gênero na sociedade, fornecendo um contexto para a compreensão dos obstáculos sistêmicos enfrentados pelas empreendedoras sociais. Ao mesmo tempo, uma análise da representação simbólica das mulheres examina as influências culturais nas perspectivas empresariais.

Complementando a análise literária, este estudo incorpora uma análise qualitativa aprofundada de cinco empreendedoras sociais brasileiras. Entrevistas semiestruturadas fornecem dados ricos sobre suas experiências, desafios e estratégias de enfrentamento. Os resultados revelam temas comuns, como barreiras financeiras, preconceito de gênero persistente, mas também a determinação de promover mudanças positivas em suas comunidades.

Essa abordagem combinada vincula as descobertas da análise literária com depoimentos da vida real, aumentando a compreensão dos problemas complexos enfrentados pelas mulheres no empreendedorismo social. As recomendações resultantes desta pesquisa fornecem insights para políticas públicas, organizações de apoio e futuros empreendedores, com o objetivo de promover um ambiente mais inclusivo e equitativo para as mulheres empreendedoras sociais no Brasil. Assim, esta dissertação contribui tanto para a pesquisa acadêmica quanto para ações concretas de promoção do empoderamento econômico das mulheres no contexto brasileiro.

Palavras-chave : Empreendedorismo social, inovação social, empoderamento da mulher, empreendedorismo social feminino, feminismo, desafios

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Introduction

For most of 4 decades, we have been witnessing the emergence of social entrepreneurship. This entrepreneurial model is based on social impact, i.e. the implementation of "innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need" (Mulgan, 2006, p. 146). Although social entrepreneurship can be a for-profit enterprise, profit is no longer the primary objective of social entrepreneurs.

Social entrepreneurship enables a new ecosystem to be put in place that places social outcomes on an equal footing with or even prioritizes, profit. Social entrepreneurs are thus agents of change, harnessing innovation at a systemic level to alter the social equilibrium. The most popular example of a social business is Grameen Bank. Founded in 1983 by Muhammad Yunus in Pakistan, this bank's distinctive feature is providing micro-loans to the most disadvantaged.

Growing in popularity, social entrepreneurship brings together two notions that are sometimes difficult to reconcile: traditional capitalist commerce and social impact. The principles of social responsibility are no longer seen as a brake on a company's economic expansion but as a lever.

Social entrepreneurship has been previously defined as the "creation of viable socioeconomic structures, relations, institutions, organizations and practices that yield and sustain social benefits". (Fowler, 2000: 649). Social entrepreneurs are thus mainly motivated by a strong desire to change society, discomfort with the status quo, altruistic feelings, and the need to be socially responsible (Bornstein, 1998; Prabhu, 1999).

Despite its rise in popularity, social entrepreneurship remains a subject in need of further development. It has been argued that the field of entrepreneurship still lacks the theoretical rigor needed to establish itself as a "legitimate" academic discipline (Gartner, 1990; Fiet, 2000). Social entrepreneurship has yet to earn its spurs in the face of the current capitalist vision. Indeed, notions of social impact are often misunderstood by the general public and even by public institutions.

Terms such as social innovation, social entrepreneurship, social enterprise and social responsibility are wrongly lumped together. Despite their similarities, they are clearly not synonyms, and each term has its own specificities. For instance, social innovation can be defined as "innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need". On the other hand, social entrepreneurship is the creation of a business to solve a social problem and create positive change. Beyond the confusion between the different denominations, the vision of social entrepreneurship, which could be described as utopian or even heroic (Humbert, 2012), also comes up against a lack of transparency, particularly concerning gender inclusivity.

Given all these factors, the issue of women in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem as founders and actors in the creation of a social impact enterprise need to be taken into consideration in today's society.

1.1. Delimitation of the study theme

Women's entrepreneurship is attracting the interest of political, economic, and academic bodies as a source of growth and employment, political, economic and academic bodies (de Bruin et al. 2007; Bel, 2009; Chabaud and Lebègue, 2013; Hugues et al) . Since the late 1950s, women have participated massively in the labor force. Today, they represent 45% of the labor force in France (Fouquet, 2005). Described as the "new face of the economy" (OECD, 2000), women entrepreneurs are receiving increasing attention. Whether in the so-called classical or social impact economy, we can see a new appeal in women's entrepreneurship.

The increase in the number of women entrepreneurs is documented in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report. In its 2013 edition, the GEM report provides data that confirms the importance of women's participation. Research shows that 52% of new entrepreneurs - those who have been in business for less than three and a half years are women.

Entrepreneurship is seen as a new door of opportunity for women who want to break through the glass ceiling and the status quo. By setting up their own business, women are promoting their own vision of work. In their quest for ever-greater independence, we're seeing the setting up of seminars and conventions to give a voice to women entrepreneurs. On June 22, 2023, The Mouvement des entrepreneurs sociaux (MOUVES), in partnership with Tech for Good France, launched "Semaine Femme Impact", an event dedicated to women impact entrepreneurs who are shaking things up across France. The idea is to give recognition to and work toward developing and sustaining women's entrepreneurship (MOUVES, 2023).

In Brazil, events promoting female entrepreneurship are also present. One of the most notable is the Delas Summit 2023, an initiative of the company Sebrae that aims to boost and strengthen women's businesses.

"Initiatives like the Delas Summit are essential to connect women entrepreneurs, to encourage them to start up and to help strengthen the skills they already possess. Today, Santa Catarina is above the national average when it comes to the percentage of entrepreneurs; 35% of women own their own business, and it's our job to promote their knowledge to succeed." (Marisa, Delas Summit 2023)

Thus, these initiatives demonstrate a genuine interest in women's entrepreneurship. However, despite these incentives, it is clear that women's entrepreneurship, whether social or traditional, remains less developed than that of men.

"Female entrepreneurship remains underdeveloped in most OECD countries. In France, the share of women in entrepreneurship is around or below 30% by any measure (creators, managers, auto-entrepreneurs, self-employed...), and the favorable dynamic observed in business start-ups in recent years has not seen these figures change significantly." (Bernard, Le Moign, Nicolai, 2013).

Despite the fluorescence/flowering of new social enterprises, we can see the reminiscence of a misogynistic model favoring men. Far less in the limelight, women have to redouble their efforts to gain the same recognition as men.

Often referred to by the Entrepreneur as "he", it's difficult to conceive of a woman as a social entrepreneur. The heroic, charismatic, and unifying aspects of a woman are overshadowed by informality and familiarity. So, even if the legal status is identical, the social perception differs. According to Bourdieu (1998), women incorporate the dominant values constructed by men, and therefore naturally think of themselves as dominated. This sociologist calls for unity in these oppositions between men and women, particularly between scientific and literary disciplines. They conceal the ultimate antagonism between the structure of domestic and social space. In his view, only by revealing the relationship of one to the other can we understand the masculine-feminine oppositions that have always marred our society.

Across the world, women have to contend with the mores and social constructs of a system that is unfavorable to them.

As Brizard (1993) notes, "they [women] did not have to defy men, they had to defy themselves." As we will see, the entrepreneurial project involves numerous changes in self-image, which we will refer to as "internal tensions". The prevalence of these tensions can lead women to reconsider the timing of starting their businesses. However, starting a business does not mean that the tensions have stopped. The mental burden of reconciling professional and personal life (having children, taking care of their husbands) with professional success and the lack of legitimacy in the eyes of peers are sources of tensions (that are) present throughout a woman entrepreneur's journey.

There are many challenges and obstacles to the adventure of being a social entrepreneur. Common obstacles to the sustainability of a social impact enterprise include lack of institutional support, lack of long-term sustainability, and lack of recognition. However, other questions arise when we add the notion of gender.

Thus, this research aims to understand the specific challenges encountered by a woman social entrepreneur, if there is an intersectionality between doing social entrepreneurship and being a woman. The solution found to the difficulties encountered will also be addressed in this study. Given the vision and international scope of this project, during this study we interviewed women social entrepreneurs.

The idea was to bring pluralism and diversity through the analysis of (two countries) with different histories and social structures and to see how these differences impact, or not, the challenges faced by women social entrepreneurs.

The research problem, therefore, boils down to the following question: **What challenges do women social entrepreneurs have to tackle in Brazil ?**

1.2. Objective

Objectives are defined as general and specific, and achieving one is critical to achieving the other.

1.2.1. General objective

The general objective is to analyze the challenges facing women social entrepreneurs. While continuing in this vein, to analyze the process of entrepreneurship in social impact enterprises by a woman.

1.2.2. Specific objectives

The specific objectives are as follows:

- Raise the context of feminine social entrepreneurship in Brazil
- Analyze the characteristics of women in social impact entrepreneurship
- Identify similarities and/or differences among women social entrepreneurs (regarding, their vision of entrepreneurship, aversion to uncertainties...)
- Understand whether gender has an impact on the challenges faced by female social entrepreneurs
- Examine solutions to these challenges

1.3. Justifications

The concept of women's empowerment has evolved over time and has different definitions and perspectives. In general, women's empowerment refers to empowering women to take control of their lives, make decisions and participate fully in all aspects of society (Reshi and Sutha, 2022). However, this meaning can also sometimes be refuted.

Despite the importance of women's empowerment, some challenges stand in the way of its achievement. These challenges include gender discrimination, lack of access to education and health care, limited economic opportunities, and cultural and social norms that limit women's roles and activities. These challenges are particularly pronounced in developing countries, where women face multiple forms of discrimination based on gender, race, and socioeconomic status.

These systemic dominations are thus present in both women's professional and personal spheres. The emergence of SDGs shows the major divide in the evolution of women's empowerment. Goal 5, gender equality, aims to put an end to all forms of discrimination against women. This includes giving women equal rights over economic resources such as land and property, and sexual and reproductive health. The altruistic aspiration of the United Nations highlights the long road that lies ahead in the socio-professional emancipation of women.

"Although the proportion of women in the workforce is higher than ever before, there are still major inequalities in some regions, where women are systematically denied the same rights as men in the world of work."(UNDP, 2023).

This dichotomy is all the more glaring in social entrepreneurship. Sometimes described as a social catalyst (Lizuka & Costa 2022) or a way of promoting a dignified existence, social entrepreneurship seems to be a solution for establishing a more empathetic system that places the social aspect before financial gain. Unfortunately, the issue of women is often overlooked. In the prism of social impact

enterprises. Women suffer from a lack of recognition and support from their male counterparts.

Although research on social entrepreneurship has increased in recent years, the contributions of women as social entrepreneurs have received little attention. Several academic research efforts have begun to dissect social entrepreneurs, describing why they choose to become social entrepreneurs, the obstacles they face, and the strategies they employ. Although the volume and breadth of research on social entrepreneurship are increasing, it remains largely based on an idealized concept of social entrepreneurship, often limiting the concept to a small group of people without taking into account the actual diversity within the category. One such category which has been largely ignored in the literature consists of the contribution that women make as social entrepreneurs (Teasdale et al., 2011).

Inherited from the intersectionality between gender and the desire to be an agent of societal change, the analysis of women's issues, particularly in social entrepreneurship, remains complex.

This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship among women. With this in mind, we will use a literary review to understand the social and systemic constructions of women. As Humbert (2012) explains, the lack of documentation on the theme of women as social entrepreneurs highlights the limited scientific and literary exploration of this subject.

The results will be disseminated through interviews with female social entrepreneurs, drawn from various sources such as the network, seminars, etc.

2. The woman social entrepreneur and her challenges

The aim of this chapter is to analyze women in the field of social entrepreneurship. As we have briefly touched on, social entrepreneurship remains a subject that needs to evolve and be discussed, whether in the current literature or among experts. The question of women's place in this field remains all the more important, given the lack of development in this area. We shall therefore begin by looking at the place of women in the current professional and social ecosystem in Brazil and elsewhere, to understand the social and explicit dominations they face daily. Hence, the finality of this analysis will be to better understand whether or not there are singularities specific to being a woman social entrepreneur, and more specifically in the challenges they have to overcome to make their business prosper.

2.1. The evolution of women's image

This section looks at the evolution of the image of women in society. By analyzing symbolic and social constructs, we'll see how these models of the feminine vision have been assimilated and influence women's place in society.

2.1.1. The evolution of her image in society

The question of the image of Brazilian women is part of a historical process that takes into account the social issues of each era. We can also note the strong influence of Western thought, especially with the arrival of colonization.

Since the colonization of Brazil, the role of Brazilian women has included sometimes exotic, sometimes degrading, and even inhuman functions. They were admired, and feared as representatives of Satan, and were reduced to objects of domination and submission by receiving a concept of "non-function", having their real influence on

the evolution of the human being, marginalized, and even annihilated (Silva et al., 2005).

Perceived as exotic, we can observe an animalization and hypersexualization of the Brazilian woman brought about by the vision of European colonizers. In Emanuel Araújo's text (cited in Del Priore, 2001), within the Brazilian colony, he discusses the "strangulation" of female sexuality as a target of state laws, churches, and parental aspirations, since "by breaking the shackles (...) female sexuality (...) threatens family equilibrium, social security and the order of civil and ecclesiastical institutions" (p. 46). The church's function is to "castrate" women's sexuality, and it is opposed to the idea of a gentleman wielding power. All women are burdened by original sin and must therefore be closely supervised throughout their lives. Women are heirs to the original sin carried by Eve and therefore perceived as carnal, impious, and tempting.

However, the idea of a sinful Eve is counterbalanced by the image of Mary Magdalene. This attempt "to eradicate the vices of the female soul" to better protect men. Inspired by the story of Mary Magdalene, the repentant sinner, churchmen strove to help "virgins to remain chaste, widows to remain chaste and women to fulfill their role as wives" (DUBY, 2001, pp. 67-68). Until the 17th century, only one sexual model was recognized: the male. Women were conceived of as an inverted, inferior man, and thus understood as a less developed subject on the scale of metaphysical perfection.

In the 19th century, bourgeois society began to discuss gender. Sex defines the differences between man and woman, while the concept of gender refers to the cultural and social construction of masculine and feminine characteristics which make us male and female.

"Gender is the cultural definition of conduct considered appropriate for both sexes in a given society (...) It is a cultural definition of man and woman. (...) It is a disguise, a mask, a straitjacket in which men and women dance. in which men and women dance their unequal dance" (Lerner, 1990, p. 339. cited by Pereiro, 2004/2005).

Following on from the distinction between gender and sex, the place of the woman takes shape: she is the opposite of the man or her complementary form. The main

idea conveyed is the subordination of women to a masculine figure. She is dependent on a man, without whom she remains incomplete. Women only develop their full potential when accompanied, otherwise, they are doomed to failure.

This patriarchal vision is also reflected in the woman's role in the family home. She had to run the house, keep it clean, look after her husband and children, be modest, go to mass, and be decent. Sexuality and fertility were considered a threat to honor and a danger requiring male control. As Hahner states: "The common stereotype of the patriarchal family in Brazil is that the husband is authoritarian, surrounded by slaves and concubines who dominate the children, while the wife is submissive. The latter becomes passive, lazy, and isolated at home (2003, p. 38).

This systematic notion of a woman's need to be governed can also be found in our society. Perhaps even today, the subconscious of Brazilian women is linked to ideas handed down from generation to generation. In addition to submission and the concept of dependence, these include indiscipline, guilt and damnation, and a certain moral fragility of women. All these elements, linked together, give legitimacy to the social "power" of men working for women's "well-being". The image of the Brazilian woman as an instrument of both pleasure and submission continues to accompany the evolution and vision of women.

However, this vision of the Brazilian woman takes on nuances. The sexual revolution and women's emancipation have played a key role in the evolution of marriage, love, and sexuality throughout modernity.

The transformation of women's social and family conditions was triggered by the strong feminist movement in many countries and its permanence in those where male domination persisted. As a result, more and more feminist struggles and achievements for freedom and equality are enjoying success and recognition (TOURAINÉ, 2011, p. 19).

This evolution led to radical transformations in people's lives and intimacy. Women are making progress in the fields of culture and politics. In the 2004 elections, the Brazilian people elected 288 female mayors and 5,000 female councilors.

Over the past 15 years, more than 12 million women have entered the Brazilian workforce. In 2005, over 30 million women worked outside the home (da Silva et al. 2005). In a more recent context, we note a deconstruction of the woman family, a being created for man, arbitrarily assigning the role of mother-wife to the woman for herself. The latter, heir to the feminist demands of her elders, is seeking to emancipate herself from the patriarchal straitjacket of Brazilian society. These two aspects demonstrate the complexity of the Brazilian woman evolving in a multipolar, constantly changing world.

2.1.2. The evolution of her image in the political and professional sphere

As we have already observed, the emergence of feminism in Brazil takes place within a set of historical and symbolic constructs. As Dr. Céli Regina Jardim Pinto explains, the objectives, manifestations, and claims of Brazilian feminism are manifold. In her book "Uma história do feminismo no Brasil", she highlights the main trends in feminism in 4 chapters, classifying them into two parts.

The first, from the end of the 19th century to 1932, is the period covered in the first chapter, while the second, post-1968 feminism, is dealt with in the other three chapters. This period focuses on the suffragette movement led by Bertha Lutz. She calls this current of feminism "well-bred" to point out the tendency towards standardization. In this sense, the struggle for women's inclusion in citizenship was not characterized by a desire to improve women's living conditions. On the contrary, it was a complement to the proper functioning of society.

Céli Pinto calls the second trend "ill-bred" feminism, which brings together a heterogeneous range of women (intellectuals, anarchists, trade union leaders) who, beyond politics, defend the right to education, talk about male domination and tackle issues that were sensitive at the time, such as sexuality, work, family and divorce. There is a third current, which the author calls "the least of the feminisms", which manifests itself specifically in the anarchist movement and the Communist Party, represented by Maria Lacerda de Moura.

To give more extent, we have to highlight that the 70s were a major turning point in the history of Brazilian feminism.

The importance of the International Women's Year in 1975 and the UN's support for Brazil should be stressed here. Living since 1964 amid a military dictatorship, where any gathering, especially of groups under constant surveillance, constituted a major risk. The Decade of Women and the Year of Women provided the opportunity to launch several events on women's issues. The struggle against dictatorship and the search for "conscientization" of the working classes made the feminist movement and women a less risky means of realizing this project.

In the '80s, women began to reshape family-work relations, spreading new ideas about gender equity and debating cultural and legal changes. Women became aware that "any definition of the role, image, identity, and codes of women is a question of equity between men and women" (GIULIANI, 2004, p. 649).

In the 1990s, according to data extracted from the PNAD, the years 1981 to 1990 were marked by a significant increase in the number of women in the workforce, which stood at 23 million in 1990, representing 35.5% of the Brazilian workforce and around 1.5% of the active population of Brazil's working population and around 32% of women enter the labor market each year (BRAD, 2005). The number of women entering the labor market has increased every year (BRUSCHINI, 1993, p. 66).

Women's work also had an impact on workers' representation, as women demanded better working conditions, as well as union representation of their demands. The sexual revision of labor and the power relationship in the family were also a topic of discussion by feminists who sought the emancipation of women. This allowed the presence of women in the labor market to become more common.

Since the 1990s, we have been able to observe a turning point in the relationship between women and the world of work.

Data taken from the survey conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics show the growth of women considered economically active between the years 2002 and 2016, in a percentage of about 30.29%, taking into account the periods of mass unemployment and financial recession in Brazil (IBGE, 2016).

We know today that, among the utopias and revolutionary projects of the 20th century, the feminist project is the one that has survived. This is certainly why we can now question the founding frameworks of this revolution in Brazil. Indeed, a new correlation of forces requires a new founding narrative.

Feminism's struggle for empowerment and liberation is ongoing and unfinished. Brazil has made great strides in terms of gender equality, but there are still many gaps and segregation between men and women in terms of family relations (domestic activities and family care) and the value placed on women in the world of work.

The deconstruction of the female family, and to more extent, of the idea of being a woman, represents a considerable advance in the social emancipation of women, enabling them to take their place in the labor market. Women have been able to emancipate themselves from society by gaining access to prestigious positions previously held only by men, as well as positions of responsibility in the health sector. Women also have an active and decisive voice in the family and can decide on the present and future of the family according to their wishes.

2.2. Social entrepreneurship

The question here is to analyze the foundations of social entrepreneurship in order to understand its mechanism in today's society.

2.2.1. Social innovation

Social innovation is the bedrock of social entrepreneurship. However, given the complexity and vastness of this field, it is often difficult to find a concise explanation of social innovation.

According to Mulgan (2006), social innovation can be defined as "innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need and that are predominantly developed and diffused through organizations whose primary purposes are social."

This notion of social impact is what mainly differentiates social innovation from classic innovation. However, the difference between these two forms of innovation is not strict. On several occasions, traditional social enterprises have used similar methods to social business. One example is the introduction of distance learning models that were launched in social organizations but then adopted by businesses (Mulgan, 2006). Although the purpose of innovation, and in a complementary sense the social economy, differs from the traditional economic system, there are many similarities between these notions. To operate, social innovation needs to satisfy a demand.

"A contented and stable world might have little need for innovation. Innovation becomes an imperative when problems are getting worse, when systems are not working or when institutions reflect past rather than present problems. As the great Victorian historian Lord Macaulay wrote: 'There is constant improvement precisely because there is constant discontent'". (Mulgan, 2006)

Driven by the desire to solve problems, social innovation represents a set of solutions to social problems and this is not limited to the non-profit sector. Social innovation can be driven by politics and government (e.g. new models of public health), markets (e.g. open source software or organic food), movements (e.g. fair trade), and science (e.g. teaching models for childcare promotion) and social enterprise (e.g. microcredit and magazines for returnees). Many of the most successful innovators have learned to operate across the boundaries between these sectors, when small organizations and entrepreneurs (mobile, fast and cross-pollinating "bees") and large organizations (rooted, "trees") can take ideas and grow them.

Both need each other, and most social change comes from alliances between the two, just as most change within organizations depends on alliances between managers and employees within formal hierarchies.

Successful social innovation does not depend on luck or moments of alchemy. Rather, it is a combination of factors and actors (notably with the theory of bees and trees) which, combined together, give rise to changes that can transcend established systems.

In The Open Book of social innovation, Murray (2010) discusses the different phases of social innovation which are the following :

1. The Prompts, inspirations and diagnosis
2. Proposals and ideas
3. Prototyping and pilots
4. Sustaining
5. Scaling and diffusion
6. Systemic changes

- The Prompts, inspirations and diagnosis

All innovations begin with a central idea. But the idea itself is often sparked by an experience, an event or new evidence that highlights a social need or injustice. Some organizations originate the ideas themselves using feedback systems to identify potential problems. Creative leaders can use symbols and demonstrations to stimulate the social imagination. In many cases, research, mapping, and data collection are used to uncover problems, as a first step in identifying solutions.

The key is to find the right problem, taking into account the triggers and inspirations.

- Proposals and ideas

This stage consists of generating ideas to find a solution to the problem posed in the previous stage. Asking the right question is the first step to finding the right answer. But once the right question has been formulated, there are a series of methods for finding and proposing solutions. Some of these methods are specifically designed to encourage creativity and new ideas - such as competitions and prizes, online platforms and idea banks. Others are adapted from related fields, such as the arts and product design. There are also processes that encourage people and organizations to see and think differently, and institutions that play a key role in driving innovation by bringing in new ideas and insights from outside perspectives. The aim is to think differently, to find the most accurate solution possible, even if it means thinking outside the box.

- Prototyping and pilots

It's all about putting things into practice. Once a promising idea has been proposed, it needs to be tested in practice. Ideas develop through trial and error, and constant refinement. Very rarely does an idea emerge fully formed. There are many ways of testing and refining ideas, from formal randomized controlled trials to pilots and experiments. Social entrepreneurs often immerse themselves in practice and hope to learn quickly without using formal tests or evaluations. A common theme of contemporary social innovation is that it often works best by moving quickly into practice, rather than spending too much time on detailed plans and strategies. This phase also examines the various funding tools available for emerging ideas and prototypes.

- Sustaining

At this stage, the idea becomes a daily practice. It is about sharpening (often rationalizing) and identifying ideas of income streams to ensure long-term financial sustainability of business, social enterprise or charity that drives innovation.

In the public sector, this means defining budgets, teams, legislative and other resources. Only a minority of ideas will survive testing and piloting. Even promising ones may not be efficient or profitable enough to survive.

When an idea or group of ideas are new, there are likely to be many competing alternatives. Usually, only a few survive. It is therefore necessary to put a plan in place to maximize the project's longevity.

- Scaling and diffusion

During this stage occurs the set up of several strategies to implement growth and dissemination of innovations. By granting licenses and franchises to associations and loose assignments. Imitation and inspiration also play a vital role in spreading ideas or ideas. Demand is as important as supply: as market demand or mobilizing the needs of commissioners and policymakers to disseminate a new model of success. This process is often referred to as "scaling". In some cases, the term is appropriate because the innovation is promoting the expansion within the organization itself.

The concept of the era of mass production, innovation is coming from socioeconomics in many other ways, both through inspiration and imitation or by offering support and expertise from someone transformed into another with a more organic and adaptive growth approach.

- Systemic change

This is the ultimate goal of social innovation. Systemic change typically involves the interaction of many elements: Social movements, business models, laws and regulations, data and infrastructure and new ways of thinking and acting. Systematic changes are usually new frameworks or architectures with many small innovations. Social innovation often encounters problems, obstacles and hostility of the old order.

Pioneers can bypass these obstacles, but the degree to which they can grow often depends on the creation of new framework conditions to make innovation economically viable.

These conditions include new technologies, supply chains and institutional form, capacity and regulatory and tax framework. System innovation in general, it's about changes in the public sector, private sector and grants economic and household sectors, mostly longer term.

Although they serve as benchmarks, these stages are not always linear. Some innovations are immediately put into practice or scaled up, while others have to go through the proposal stage again because the entrepreneur has realized that the solution is not in line with the problem to be solved.

As we have highlighted, social innovation is such a rich and complex theme that there is no magic formula for finding the perfect solution. The responsibility of social entrepreneurs is therefore to respond as effectively as possible to the social imperatives of this developing subject.

2.2.2. Social responsibility and corporate social responsibility CSR

As we explained above, social entrepreneurship and social impact movements are becoming increasingly important in the economic scheme of things. Despite this, the majority of companies in the private sector are still profit-driven enterprises whose aim is to generate profits. With this in mind, we need to find out whether these companies are still guided by the principles of social responsibility. The answer is Corporate Social Responsibility.

Although there is no common consensus on the definition of CSR (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001), we can nevertheless attempt to define it as "the voluntary integration by companies of social and environmental concerns into their business activities and their relations with their stakeholders" (Generali, 2011). CSR thus rests on 3 pillars:

- **Economic:** Satisfy and retain customers, guarantee quality of service, apply fair prices, support local suppliers, pay bills on time and be transparent with investors.
- **Social:** Improve equality of opportunity and diversity, safeguard health and safety in the workplace, respect workers' rights.
- **Environment:** Efficient and sustainable use of natural resources such as oil, gas and water, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, limiting waste, particularly hazardous waste, and promoting biodiversity.

Recent studies (Wei et al, 2020) show that, through CSR activities, companies can not only generate a favorable attitude from stakeholders, improve supportive behavior, but also gain in reputation. According to the Skroupa report (2022), 70% of millennials with the highest incomes invest in companies with a high level of CSR.

Regarding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the literature does not question the main motives of for-profit firms, but think managers of for-profit companies do not need to think not only the interests of the owners, but also the interests of other stakeholders must be considered or are affected by the operations of for-profit organizations.

Other studies even point to corporate social responsibility guidelines and practice improve the performance of for-profit organizations. In other words CSR aggregates profitability (Philips and al, 2015). As Ronald and Samuel (2022) explain, there is a link between CSR and profitability. Therefore, companies with excellent CSR performance can create a competitive advantage. and can increase revenues through sales (Cubilla-Montilla et al., 2019).

In addition, a company that focuses more on social responsibility can significantly broaden its customer base, increase its sales volume and enhance its pricing power (Martin & Moser, 2016). The role of CSR is as a means of communicating and socializing the company's organization to the public as well as to stakeholders in the most objective way possible (Stocker et al., 2020).

Furthermore, CSR performance can be served as the "doing well by doing good" image is used by investors to make their investment decision (Lys et al., 2015; Martin & Moser, 2016). By promoting social values such as the integration of sexual and physical minorities, or the fight against domestic violence, the company not only secures "a good conscience", but also popular support from customers, which in turn influences the company's return on investment.

Despite companies' efforts to optimize their Corporate Social Responsibility practices, it remains clear that they are missing out on the huge untapped opportunity that social innovation represents for business. If organizational leaders want CSR to add more value to their business, they need to understand how they can better integrate social innovations into their CSR programs, possibly drawing on the studies of social entrepreneurs who strive to manage the duality between applying a business approach and achieving a social goal (Phillips et al, 2015).

2.2.3. Definition of a social entrepreneur

The emergence of research on social entrepreneurship and social innovation highlights the need to develop a common understanding not only of the term "social innovation" but also of its links with social entrepreneurship. Although debate rages about the links between social innovation and social entrepreneurship, few links have been established (Defourny & Nyssens, 2010). Despite the absence of consensus surrounding entrepreneurship and social innovation, it seems clear that these terms share similarities and a certain duality.

According to Limeira (2013), social entrepreneurship is a field of socio-environmental action and realization of business, which aims to achieve two goals considered irreconcilable: generating social impact and economic value.

As Ferri (2011) explains, social entrepreneurship is a movement that shows the way in which societies can renew themselves. Therefore, the most important result that

social entrepreneurs can achieve in the short term is a change in mentality, in the sense of believing that the world's most difficult problems can be solved

Perceived as change agents, social entrepreneurs leverage innovation at the system level about changes in the social balance. Above all, focus on 'double outcome' fuels social dynamics. Entrepreneurs must excel not only financially but also socially (Emerson and Twersky, 1996), as do many companies with strong social missions.

The social entrepreneur is thus marked by a deep-seated desire to bring about societal change by applying classical entrepreneurship concepts. As Malunga et al (2014) explain, successful social enterprises often share a common characteristic: they creatively combine resources they often don't possess themselves to solve a social problem and thus change existing social structures. One of the most popular examples is the Grameen Bank, founded by Professor Muhammad Yunus in 1976, has changed the lives of millions of people by bringing financial services to the most destitute.

This example shows how social entrepreneurship tackles social problems, in this case poverty, because poor people can't access loans from commercial banks. According to Christensen et al (2006), the renewed interest in social entrepreneurship and social innovation in recent years can be attributed to the perceived weaknesses and failure of the dominant for-profit business sector. The prolonged recession and pressure on public finances have led to a reduction in the size of the public sector and a desire to see certain activities currently supported by the state become supported by social entrepreneurship and social innovation.

According to Smith and Stevens (2010), there are three types of social entrepreneur. These are the **social bricoleur**, the **social constructionist** and the **social engineer**

- **Social bricoleurs** target local social problems. They have first-hand experience of the problems facing the community. Problem recognition is stimulated by their exposure to the community in which they reside.

- **Social constructionists** generally identify opportunities that others may not yet have identified; unlike social tinkers, their target is broader than the local community, and their solutions can be used in different contexts. Social constructionists are therefore resource-dependent, as the scalability of their mission depends on their ability to adapt.

- **Social engineers**, on the other hand, focus on large-scale problems that concern the greatest number of people and of which everyone is aware, such as unemployment. They then create solutions that transform the entire existing system to address the problem.

Concerning the apparition of social entrepreneurship in Brazil, the first initiatives in the field of social entrepreneurship emerged in the 1980s. "in the face of growing social problematization, the reduction of public investments in the social field, the growth of third sector organizations and the participation of companies in social investment and social actions", according to Oliveira (2004). Table 1 shows some examples of social enterprises operating in the country.

The initiatives of Brazilian social entrepreneurs are aimed at the population groups contemplated by the government programs "Brasil Sem Miséria" and "Bolsa Família", as well as the lower income range of the middle class, defined in a report by the Secretariat of Strategic Affairs (2012) based on April 2012 values, namely:

1. the extremely poor, those with a capita per family income of up to R\$ 81;
2. the poor, with per capita family income between R\$ 81 and R\$ 162;
3. the vulnerable, who have per capita family income between R\$ 162 and R\$ 291
4. the lower middle class, with a per capita family income between R\$ 291 and R\$ 441
5. the middle middle class, with per capita family income between R\$ 441 and R\$ 641.

In academia, the field of social entrepreneurship is developing, with several educational institutions carrying out research and courses, such as the Center for

Social Entrepreneurship and Management in the Third Sector (o Centro de Empreendedorismo Social e Administração em Terceiro Setor in portuguese) at the University of São Paulo in 1998; Center for Sectoral Studies (CETS) and the Center for Entrepreneurship and New Business (GVcenn) in 2004; INSPER the Center for Entrepreneurship (CEMP) in 2009. From 2001, the first batch of texts and books on this topic were published domestically, such as Ashoka and McKinsey (2001), Rouere and Pádua (2001), Melo Neto and Froes (2002) and Oliveira (2004).

Another step in Brazilian SE is, the creation of the Social Enterprise Knowledge Network (SEKN), in 2001 brings together researchers from Latin American business schools. National and international organizations that support social entrepreneurs have also established themselves in the country such as Ashoka, Artemisia, Fundación Avina and NESsT.

Throughout a bunch of social businesses emerged. We can expose few examples of social Business in the table below :

Table 1: Examples of Social Business in Brazil

<p>Grupo Primavera : a civil society organization (CSO) founded in 1981, it develops complementary education programs for girls from 8 to 18 years old, in Campinas, with income from the sale of its handmade products.</p>
<p>Associação Saúde Criança : a civil society organization founded in 1991, has the mission to promote the biopsychosocial well-being of children and their families living below the poverty line. Its work is based on its own methodology, the Family Action Plan (PAF), which encompasses meeting the needs of the target population in five areas: health, professionalization, housing, education and citizenship.</p>
<p>Comitê para Democratização da Informática (CDI) : a civil society organization founded in 1995, opened the first School of Informatics and Citizenship in Morro Dona Marta, Rio de Janeiro, which offers computer courses using its own methodology. Its mission is to improve the quality of life of the low-income population and foster citizenship.</p>

Banco Palmas : a civil society organization founded in 1998 by the Association of Residents of the Conjunto Palmeira, in Fortaleza. As a community bank, its mission is to implement income generation projects, guaranteeing microcredits for local production and consumption, with minimum interest rates and no guarantor minimum interest rates and no requirement for guarantors.

Rede Asta : a civil society organization and social business founded in 2007, which transforms community artisan groups into sustainable businesses and promotes socio-economic inclusion of low-income women. of low-income women. There are 700 artisans and 800 resellers of exclusive products, created from banana fiber and bamboo.

Sementes de Paz : created in 2008, is a social enterprise with profit distribution, which aims to strengthen the production chain of ecological agriculture and fair trade, acting as a link between producers and consumers, through between producers and consumers, through a partnership with more than 50 producers.

Carreta da Saúde : is a civil society organization of public interest (OSCIP) founded in 2004 in São Paulo, which, in partnership with local governments and the private sector, offers high-tech medical examinations to the population on the outskirts of cities in mobile carts.

Geekie - founded in 2011, is a for-profit social enterprise that develops the first adaptive teaching platform in Brazil to optimize each student's studies in a personalized and interactive way. Students are challenged according to their abilities in each subject, so that their learning is continuous.

source :Empreendedorismo social no Brasil : estado da arte e desafios

This framework of incentive to encourage social initiatives shows the enormous potential for growth of social entrepreneurship. It assumes that economic efficiency is for the general good, and aims to facilitate change and crisis that may be going through (public deficit, decentralization, social, psychological and physical protection). Consequently, social enterprises tend to help the country mitigate worsening social and ecological problems. In simple terms, a social enterprise is one that has a social or social purpose and is of limited profit (reinvestment of profits in projects, limited return on capital, salary levels.)

As well as the complexity of social entrepreneurship we can observe a multiplicity of terms involving the area of SE. On this topic, Comini (2011) proposes different

definitions used to identify social enterprises in the national and international literature. Social enterprise, inclusive enterprise, and social enterprise are some of the terms used to identify organizations that "aim to solve social problems with high efficiency and financial sustainability," through market mechanisms.

2.3. Focus on women social entrepreneurs

In this section, we will address the question of women as social entrepreneurs. The question will be to understand the singularity of being a woman and to link the question of entrepreneurship to social impact. It will be to analyze the place of women in today's society through these struggles and the way in which social constructions are inscribed in the societal schema. The aim is therefore to delve into the realm of women social entrepreneurs, highlighting their identities, their distinctions and their remarkable innovations. Although their contributions often go unnoticed, these women have brought about significant social change through their businesses. By challenging the myths and assumptions surrounding women's social entrepreneurship, this report seeks to reveal the true depth of their innovation and its transformative potential. Through in-depth analysis and case studies, we aim to spark curiosity, critical reflection and a radical reimagining of the future of social innovation and women's entrepreneurship on a global scale.

2.3.1. The specificities of the female social entrepreneur

In recent decades, both academia and government have shown interest in exploring social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship can be defined as an entrepreneur or entrepreneurial teams identifying and capitalizing on social opportunities with help from management ways to create social wealth for society (Mair & Marti, 2006; Morris et al., 2011). As such, social entrepreneurship is considered a key driver of social and economic development for their role in innovative responses to societal challenges, and market-oriented pursuit of financial sustainability (Nicholls & Cho, 2008; Huff, 2005).

In this peculiar ecosystem, the role of the woman entrepreneur is difficult to define. Indeed, we note a lack of consensus regarding the qualification of the female social entrepreneur. As Humbert (2012) explains, the quantity of articles dealing with this subject remains scarce. However, we can highlight the portrait of the female social entrepreneur. For example, research by Van Ryzin et al (2009) proposes that women engaged in social entrepreneurship are more likely to be racially diverse, younger in age, university educated, identify as female, reside in urban centers, and have some prior business experience. The results of this survey highlight that women are more likely to participate in social entrepreneurship than their male counterparts.

The authors posit that cultural values may exert an influence on the spectrum of work and career avenues deemed suitable for women. Furthermore, while the upward trajectory of female entrepreneurship remains evident, certain regions grapple with persistent gender-related challenges and cultural preconceptions that impede business expansion (Gatewood et al., 2009). Therefore, as highlighted by Baughn et al. (2006), nations that nurture and endorse women entrepreneurs by cultivating an environment of respect and gender parity are likely to witness an elevated prevalence of female entrepreneurship.

There is also a growing number of entrepreneurship researchers who, in their investigations, focus on the family context and its link to work-life balance. Jennings and McDougald (2007) find that family or domestic contexts can have a greater impact on women than on men. In the most recent studies in this field, the quality of family life is presented as a key element in the work-life balance of female entrepreneurship (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Brush et al., 2009).

Another aspect to consider when analyzing women entrepreneurs is how they behave in relation to men. When looking at competitiveness from a gender perspective, the data show women do as well as men when competing with other women, but do not do as well when competing with men (GNEEZY et al. 2003). In addition, women also tend to be less risk-taking and less competitive than men (CROSON & GNEEZY, 2009; DOHMEN et al., 2011; ECKEL & GROSSMAN, 2008).

This may explain the lack of opportunities they face in the professional world. As a result, they tend to decline jobs that confront them with men (DOHMEN et al., 2011). This desire to avoid confrontation is reflected in social entrepreneurship. Women will either develop businesses that are directly related to women (domestic violence, sexual harassment, gender inequality) or will privilege fewer popular forms of business.

One form of social entrepreneurship favored by women is inclusive entrepreneurship/business. According to Ranjatoelina (2018,) inclusive enterprise was initially defined by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in a document known as the Business Call to Action ((United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2008, 2010, 2014)). According to this definition, the inclusive business model focuses on the inclusion of impoverished people, either as consumers, workers or suppliers in the production chain. In developed countries, this model focuses primarily on the employment of excluded workers (Márquez et al., 2009; Ranjatoelina, 2018). In the same way as students in vocational integration or people with disabilities, women can be excluded from the classic professional scheme. In the qualitative survey conducted by Lizuka and Costa (2022), out of seven female social entrepreneurs, four benefit women.

The remaining 3 benefit low-income families, minorities and the community. Social enterprises founded by women are frequently established to combat the exclusion that they have already experienced. As Ranjatoelina's (2018) study explains, we can see "self inclusive" enterprise creation. In other words, the case where a person in a situation of exclusion or vulnerability creates its own business. This point of view, promoted by women entrepreneurs (social or formal) highlights a form of positive discrimination. By wanting to include only the discriminated people, they tend to reject the dominant class, the men. They will thus tend to favor one of the groups composed of women like the Network of Women Entrepreneurs (Rede de Mulher Empreendedoras) for the exchange of experiences and mutual support (LIZUKA & COSTA, 2022).

The majority of inclusive entrepreneurships led by women are part of the fight against the stigmas, prejudices, vulnerabilities and discriminations that generate

social exclusion from the formal labor market related to gender. Analyzing this issue from another angle, if there were no problems in the social construction of gender or sexual violence against women, would there be a space for these inclusive enterprises? (LIZUKA & COSTA, 2022). The fact that women primarily focus on fairly similar social themes highlights the lack of diversity in the sphere of women's social entrepreneurship.

Despite these factors we can highlight a better parity in social entrepreneurship than in the mainstream one.

GEM data from 2009 reveals that while the prevalence of females in social entrepreneurship surpasses that in traditional entrepreneurial activities, men are generally more inclined to initiate social ventures. The female-male ratio is higher in Social Entrepreneurial Activity (SEA) compared to Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) with a 10% difference and 5.3% margin of error ($p < .0001$). Gender ratios in SEA vary across countries; some, like Argentina, Iceland, Israel, Lebanon, and Russia, show a higher proportion of women social entrepreneurs, while others, notably Brazil and Bosnia Morocco, have more men. Countries such as China, Finland, Latvia, and the US exhibit relatively balanced gender proportions (Terjesen et al., 2011).

SELUSI 2010 data echoes this trend, revealing that men typically lead social enterprises, yet significant country-specific variations exist. In Hungary and Romania, female-to-male-run social enterprise ratios exceed 1, indicating a prevalence of female-run ventures. Conversely, Spain and the UK display ratios below 1. The smaller gender gap in social entrepreneurship aligns with non-profit sector participation rates, where women often lead. Women's commercial entrepreneurship also emphasizes social over economic goals, suggesting differences in stated goals.

As we can see, the world of social entrepreneurship in the female context is a complex one. It is evident that businesses founded by women are an important part of entrepreneurship. While more men than women start a business, the gender gap in social enterprise is closing (NICOLAS & RUBIO, 2016). This can be explained by the fact that the roles and stereotypes that influence women's behavior lead them to

strongly identify with the values disseminated by social enterprises. Increased participation of women in society makes them key players in driving such necessary initiatives where they are not possible for public institutions to address all social problems.

We must, however, remain aware of the disparities between men and women in this sector. The lack of diversity in the sectors chosen by women social entrepreneurs, or the desire to avoid competition with their male counterparts, highlights systemic enclaves that are still strong in contemporary society.

2.4. The challenges

The development of women social entrepreneurs is part of a process whose multiplicity makes it difficult to understand the challenges they face. However, we can highlight several of them.

2.4.1. The affirmation in front of negative socio-cultural values

Firstly the woman entrepreneur is constrained by the conservative mentalities of the society. We can observe a lack of confidence in women social entrepreneurs. A constant questioning of their ability and their legitimacy in front of other male and older entrepreneurs. This greater propensity of the male group can be explained by the social role theory or its extended version, the gender role theory, developed by Eagly (1987), in which it is asserted that it is not biological predisposition but culture that defines socially acceptable behavior for each sex. While the male role is associated with control or achievement, making them responsible for the financial support of the family, women are traditionally associated with working in the home, carrying out household chores and caring for children and other dependents. It is these roles and stereotypes that lead to the conclusion that the ideal gender for creating and managing businesses is male, not female. Connell (1990) also supports this argument with his theory of hegemonic masculinity, asserting that in the business world there is a hierarchical order between men and women, whereby men

are seen as the norm and women as the exception to the rule (Godwin, Stevens, & Brenner, 2006).

The fact that women have pre-established roles and are conditioned by the principles of hegemonic masculinity can lead to differences in the way they manage their lives, but also impact on their social enterprise.

2.4.2. Difficult access to market

The market regarding social entrepreneurship is insufficiently structured. We can observe a lack of support from the government, regarding aid and subsidies in social impact enterprise and entrepreneurship. Indeed, initiatives encouraging social entrepreneurship in Brazil are still weak. Social enterprises need to be part of an ecosystem that is conducive to their development.

"Social enterprises do not develop in a vacuum, but emerge in a particular socio-cultural, economic and political environment, where various agents and social networks come together, making it possible for their initiatives to develop. This environment is called an ecosystem." (LIMEIRA, 2007).

However, we can see that the favorable ecosystem has not yet reached its full potential in Brazil. Social organizations develop business models based on inter-organizational arrangements and agreements and share or exchange capital, technologies, products and services. These agreements involve collaboration between the organizations involved, as well as various types of partnerships, including alliances, franchises, subcontracting and value chains (Williamson, 1991). The value chain is a concept proposed by Porter (1985) and represents the set of activities involved in the creation, production, marketing, delivery and support of products and services, which are carried out by companies that collaborate with each other to generate value for all stakeholders.

This concept of value generation can be found in social entrepreneurship and social innovation, notably in the theory of bees and trees (MULGAN, 2006).

"The bees are the small organizations, individuals and groups who have the new ideas, and are mobile, quick and able to cross-pollinate. The trees are the big organizations - governments, companies or big NGOs - which are

poor at creativity but generally good at implementation, and which have the resilience, roots and scale to make things happen." (Social Innovation what it is, why it matters and how it can be accelerated, MULGAN, 2006)

To put it into context, the lack of trees, i.e. official organizations supporting the growing social entrepreneurship sector in Brazil, is preventing the proliferation of numerous, high-impact "bees".

2.4.3. Difficulty in reconciling family and professional life

Finding a balance between work and family remains a serious problem for women. It is more pronounced in a society where women are expected to take care of their households, their husbands and their children. It's clear that the importance of women in the world of work is only increasing. However, it remains incontestable that there are gender-related disparities in the world of work.

Research conducted by IBGE in 2018 looked at women's work per hour at home compared to men's. It shows that women perform around 18.1 hours of domestic work, while men spend 10.5 hours. (GANDRA, 2018). Domestic work, in addition to being considered a female obligation, represents invisible work that hinders women's development as professionals in the labor market.

In addition, we can see a decline in women's earnings and wages with increasing age, and the number of hours worked is also reduced. In contrast, men aged 40 to 49 increase their earnings by more than 50% compared to the 25 to 29 age group, demonstrating a further subdivision in gender differentiation (IBGE, 2019). In addition, the survey also highlighted the gender division according to type of work, showing that functions such as domestic work have a priority female output (95%°, followed by occupations such as primary school teachers (84%), cleaning work (74.9%) and work in the agriculture and livestock sector. and work in call centers (72.2%) (IBGE, 2019). The gender pay gap is evident in both professions requiring basic education and those requiring higher education. "Among primary school teachers, women received 90.5% of the income of men. Among university and higher education teachers, whose share (49.8%) was close to that of men, women's income was equivalent to that of men.

Despite the evolution of equality between men and women, the labor market continues to separate men and women, whether in terms of salary or type of work. What's more, women continue to play the role of housewife, even though they officially work the same number of hours as men. They therefore experience a double working day. All these elements encourage mental burden and thus are obstacles to women's professional fulfillment.

3. Methodological procedures

The aim of this chapter is to reveal the methods used to study the subject of challenges faced by women social entrepreneurs. Through the collection, organization and analysis of data, in order to achieve the general and specific objectives defined above. The research presented here is exploratory and qualitative in nature.

"The purpose of qualitative research is to develop concepts that help us understand social phenomena in natural (rather than experimental) contexts, with an emphasis on the meanings, experiences and perspectives of all participants." (Mays and Pope, 1995, p. 43).

The exploratory methods used aim to obtain data on specific aspects of human and social reality, and in so doing, seek to understand experiences, values and aspirations (NIQUE, LADEIRA, 2014). Qualitative research is part of a process that can be complex, requiring both flexibility and rigor.

This study is based on interviews with 5 women social entrepreneurs, taking into account the singularities of each social enterprise.

3.1. In-depth interviews with female social entrepreneurs

As part of the qualitative analysis, we selected 5 women social entrepreneurs whose social enterprises had been in existence for at least a year. These women were subjected to in-depth interviews. The choice of these people was made following indications from university specialists such as doctoral students, or my guidance professor. The idea was to optimize the people who could bring academic added value to this work, taking into account the question of gender and social impact entrepreneurship. To this end, the following characteristics were highlighted in the selection of interviewees. (1) To be a woman; (2) To be the director/founder or a major partner of an association or social impact enterprise (3); (4) That the entity has been in existence for at least 1 year (this criterion is not exhaustive, just preferential for the purposes of analysis).

To carry out the interviews, we used the semi-directive method. The semi-directive interview, also known as the qualitative interview or in-depth interview, is a qualitative research method. Its aim is to gather information that provides explanations or evidence for research work.

"The semi-structured interview is a data-gathering technique that contributes to the development of knowledge favoring qualitative and interpretive approaches, particularly from constructivist paradigms." (Lincoln, 1995).

To obtain this data, semi-structured interviews consisted of a series of open-ended questions. They are prepared in advance by researchers, and the data collected must be interpreted to draw up an argued conclusion on the chosen theme (Claude, 2019).

The instrument used for data collection was a semi-directive interview guide divided into 4 parts, covering the key themes of the research. The first part deals with the social entrepreneur's trajectory up to the creation of his business (education, previous professional experience). The second part deals with the creation phase of the social enterprise, i.e. from the generation of the idea to its realization. The third part looks at the vision of the woman as a social entrepreneur, through the duality of being a woman but also being the leader of an enterprise with a social impact. Finally, the last section examines the challenges of being a woman in the social entrepreneurship sector.

The construction of this grid was based on academic research on the subject, but also on indications from my guidance teacher. The idea was to highlight relevant questions that would lead the interviewee to reflect deeply on the subject.

3.2. Data collection and organization

The interviews were conducted remotely via Google Meet between June and July. During this phase, the duration of the exchanges ranged from 35 minutes to 1 hour, with an average of 45 minutes per interview. All interviews were recorded and transcribed in their entirety, enabling the most accurate data comparison possible.

Transcription was carried out in two stages. The first stage involved the use of software to convert audio files into text. The purpose of this step was to reduce the time-consuming aspect of the task. For the sake of clarity and precision, the data was checked a second time and then classified in an excel file according to the above-mentioned themes. According to Minayo (2012), tabulation makes it easier to highlight similarities, differences and relationships between data, and to understand and interpret content. Using Excel, we can summarize the information obtained in a didactic and accessible way.

Future interviewees were initially contacted via Whatsapp to facilitate responsive exchanges. Once the interview had been confirmed, virtual meetings were set up by email in accordance with the previously chosen schedule.

I was introduced to social entrepreneurs thanks to recommendations from my academic circle, but also as a result of various interviews with social entrepreneurs wishing to put me in contact with their peers.

In order to preserve the anonymity of each person involved, the names of the entrepreneurs and social business have been changed.

The five social entrepreneurs interviewed are described in Table 2.

Table 2 : Social entrepreneur interviewed

Social Business	Date of creation	Social entrepreneur
Business A	2021	Clara
Business B	2020	Sandra
Business C	2022	Miranda

Business D	2020	Sonia
Business E	2019	Caroline

Source : Made by the author

3.3. Data analysis

After data collection comes data analysis. Qualitative research is generally interpretative: the aim is not to test theories, but to understand a given phenomenon on the basis of interpretations, testimonies or opinions gathered (CLAUDE, 2019). The idea is to analyze in order to interpret and achieve previously established objectives.

For the purposes of this analysis, the thematic method was chosen. As stated by Paillé and Mucchielli (2021), with thematic analysis, the work of qualitative analysis involves data reduction procedures. To summarize and process his corpus, the analyst will use denominations called "themes" (or "thematizations" and sometimes also "sub-themes" to refer to the decomposition of certain themes). In short, the aim is to use themes to provide step-by-step answers to the problems encountered in various analysis projects. Thematic analysis can be used as a single research method, or it can be combined with other analytical strategies (PAILLÉ & MUCCHIELLI, 2021).

The classification of data from interviews with social entrepreneurs has been separated into (2) thematic categories: (1) About the social entrepreneurs, where their background and experiences are presented (2) on the question of gender in entrepreneurship, which addresses the impact of women in the creation and development of their social enterprise, as well as the challenges they face.

Finally, we will address the final consideration concerning the topic taking into consideration the literature review as well as the empirical study.

4. Data analysis

4.1. In-depth interviews with social entrepreneurs

This section is divided as follows: firstly, the social entrepreneurs interviewed are the social entrepreneurs interviewed and their life trajectories. Afterwards, their social businesses are presented in order to better illustrate their area of beneficiaries and the problems they seek to solve, among other aspects. The third item deals with the question of gender and how it impacts the vision of their business. Then the fourth item will take into consideration motivations regarding the social and/or environmental sphere. Finally, the question of challenges faced with social business and its potential impact will be addressed. To facilitate reader's understanding, each topic will be separated by social business.

4.1.1. About social entrepreneurs

- **Business A**

Clara is founder and CEO of Business A. Her background is in civil engineering. As far as her academic background is concerned, she spent her childhood in a private school. During middle and high school, however, she studied in public schools. Despite the fact that "public schools are worse than private schools", Clara still managed to get into the Federal University of Santa Maria to study civil engineering. After 5 years of study, she managed to obtain her engineering degree in 2017, but encountered difficulties in her post-graduate professional integration.

"[...] After that, it was very difficult to find a job because I didn't want to work in engineering. I wanted to work with marketers. Meanwhile, I was also very interested in innovation. I took part in an exchange program in India, where I worked for six months in a start-up company. It was a very small school, but it was interesting. After that, I imagined it would be easier to find a job because I'd have English and

international experience, but that wasn't the case. So it was a very difficult period, I almost sank into depression, but I managed not to have a major breakdown. That's when I joined, with some friends, a start-up of my undergraduate friends called Wheel School, and that's what I did."

On the strength of this exchange to India and this first experience in a start-up, Betina seems to have found her calling in the education sector. Indeed, one of the start-up's first partners specialized in teacher training. Unfortunately, the company was unable to sustain itself over time, and this first entrepreneurial adventure came to an end.

Despite the end of this project, Clara still manages to familiarize herself with the world of innovation, as she explains:

"[...] it [Wheel School] helped me a lot to enter the innovation market, which many people don't know is mainly made up of white heterosexual men,"

After working briefly for a year in marketing at a law firm, she decided to leave the company to concentrate on setting up her own business. In 2021, she set up her own company, with the help of a Brazilian partner living in Ireland, where she works full-time.

Regarding her three qualities, she defines herself as a generalist, i.e. someone with general knowledge of a wide spectrum of notions without specializing in one in particular.

"I don't know if that's the right word to describe a quality, but I know a bit of everything, I don't focus on just one thing, which helps me, even as a manager, because you have to do a bit of everything at first, don't you?"

Her curiosity is also another aspect that defines her personality, as she describes it as "certainly a very good thing..."

- **Business B**

Sandra is co-founder and CEO of business B. Her academic background is in history. Before founding her company, Sandra had always worked in sales and

marketing for various companies. Despite her training as a historian, she has always been communicative, reaching out to people, sales and marketing and technology companies, which she describes as a "passion". This can be heard in her professional career, as she works as an innovation consultant simultaneously with her position as CEO.

With regard to her main qualities, Sandra is considered to be an empathetic person who listens to the needs of others. What's more, her management skills are recognized by her peers.

Business C

Miranda is founder and CEO of the Business C. She has a degree in Public Relations from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PURCS) and an MBA in Strategic Leadership from the Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing (ESPM). Beyond the academic validation, Miranda chose these studies out of passion as she explains:

"I've always been passionate about working with people, so I worked with NGOs for a long time, didn't I. I've been studying social work for two years now, and I'm doing a second degree in translation to complete my knowledge in this field."

She is enthusiastic about the fields of public relations and associations. Indeed, Laís has on several occasions volunteered with associations involved in the struggle for civil rights, the fight against poverty and the environment.

Before launching her own business, she worked in the communications, marketing and design sectors. Today, she works full-time as CEO.

Her three main qualities are perseverance, curiosity and optimism.

- **Business D**

Sonia is the CEO of Business D. She has a background in Aerospace pharmaceuticals. She studied this field at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul where she obtained a bachelor and master degree. After that, she got a PhD in pharmaceutical technology and aerospace pharmacy from King's College London. Marlise was for almost 23 years an associate professor at the Department of Pharmacy at the Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS) and coordinator of the Joan Vernikos Aerospace Pharmacy Laboratory at the PUCRS MicroG Center. Thanks to her academic background and expertise in her field, Sonia has written several scientific reviews dealing with aerospace pharmacy.

"I edited a book with two other people, two American researchers, which is a Space farmacêuticas manual. It is the first reference book that exists in this field in Brazil -not in the world, which was published by Springer. This book was also awarded a prize, and even had the opportunity to go and work in Vancouver."

Regarding social impact, She has always had this inclination to want to have an impact in society.

"I think ever since I was little, I've always had this will, as we say here, right? This social will, I think it's quite in my nature, you know? [...] I sometimes think that perhaps the ideal would have been to create an NGO rather than a company."

Combining her passion with her vocation for space pharmaceuticals, Sonia decided to create her company. Along with her business she is also a Board of Advisor Member of the organization Innovation since 2018.

Sonia is known for her pragmatism and resilience.

- **Business E**

Caroline is founder and CEO of the business E. Her background is in architecture. Before founding her enterprise, Caroline had always worked in architecture. She

holds an MBA and a post-graduate diploma (pos-graduação) in commercial architecture. As she explained, her work in her company was a drastic change in her professional career.

"I've always worked in the field of architecture, but today I'm the founder and CEO of the [Business E] application, which has nothing to do with architecture and is totally oriented towards family relationships and childcare."

Combining her role as mother of two children (aged 18 and 17 respectively), Aline set up her company in 2020, where she works full-time.

As for her qualities, Caroline characterizes herself as a good leader through her ability to direct people with efficiency and organization. She is also an aggregator, thanks to her ability to gather and create contacts in order to develop her network. Last but not least, she's an empath, because of her willingness to support people who have problems and need help to get out of them.

4.1.2. About their social enterprises

- **Business A**

Business A is a start-up specializing in human resources (HR tech) and education (Edutech). In creating her company, Clara's aim was to "Revolutionize the recruitment selection process by ensuring transparency in the evaluation of companies by candidates." To achieve this, the company is divided into two parts:

- **The candidate part:** where candidates create a space where they can evaluate companies already present on the platform, or create a profile for the company if it does not yet exist on the platform.
- **The company part:** where the business offers information and NPS (Net Promoter Score which are satisfaction indicators) on vacancies for your candidates; a recruitment tool for small companies that enables you to manage vacancies and candidates easily; providing courses on

the candidate experience, leading the future, collaborative culture and Continuing Education for HR as well as consulting services.

The company aims to develop faster, more agile, and more responsive recruitment and selection processes, offering a better candidate experience. The idea came from the real-life experience of its founder. As she puts it :

"The idea came from my suffering as a candidate or person, because communication in schools is not well managed. So there's a big communication gap, whether it's family or professional friends. In the field of recruitment and selection. So today, I'm the owner of a social startup in the recruitment and selection field, whose aim is to improve the candidate experience by bringing them more transparency and diversity."

Realizing that this problem affected a large part of the Brazilian population (nearly 90% of the working population according to her). Seeing an opportunity, in 2021 Betina decided to set up her own company to promote knowledge sharing, as well as a more humanized and transparent selection process.

The corporation operates exclusively on a national scale. Its long-term goal is to expand across the country and gain popularity in the recruitment industry. The team is made up mainly of Clara as head of operations and her partner for marketing.

In terms of financing, the company is not yet raising money from investors or investment funds, and uses mainly personal sources of funding.

"Today I don't make any money from this startup, we're still getting our first clients. So if it was for money I wouldn't be here, [...] Ah, I've been very lucky because my associate is the angel who fell into my life, I joke like this, he doesn't like me saying it, but he's my angel investor, so I'm the one who runs the whole business and my partner pays the bills, I have a small salary so that I can run my company [...] today we would call our investment bootstrapping, right in the world of startups."

- **Business B**

Business B is an application designed to connect consumers with small and local retailers specializing in Brazilian products in Germany. It was born out of the desire to facilitate the purchase of specifically Brazilian products, to offer users options and convenience, so that they can, from a single platform, discover and buy products, food and even services close to home, based on their geolocation.

The site offers local products, beauty, culture, clothing, activities, etc., based on their location, giving the consumer a certain level of comfort and a variety of options, while giving visibility to the entrepreneur/shopkeeper and stimulating the local, sustainable economy.

In addition to offering services and products, the institution offers German expatriates the chance to rediscover creativity and the Brazilian way of life. The company's name is a reference to this unique way of life.

"Our platform is called [Business B] because in communication I say it's the app of the [...], this Brazilian quality, this way of living a lighter life, of going through difficulties, this thing, this fluidity."

As she explains, the enterprise brings lightness but above all a sense of comfort to the daily lives of people who are separated thousands of kilometers from their homeland of origin. The team is made up of three people: Sandra as CEO, her associate as CFO (Chief Financial Officer), and a developer looking after the operational side of the application.

For the time being, the firm doesn't allow Sandra to work full-time; she also works as an innovation consultant.

"I'm an innovation consultant and today I run an accelerator program for others where I created the methodology, I use workshops, I do consulting, so all my knowledge in the field of entrepreneurial recording, I'm replicating today because I don't have a fixed income that comes to pay the bills so I'm 100% dedicated to the business. "

- **Business C**

Business C is a social enterprise whose aim is to integrate social, environmental and governance actions within a systemic vision. The mission of the company is to empower people and generate a positive socio-environmental impact, by encouraging citizenship and sustainable development.

To achieve this, the company has set up two solutions:

- Solution 1: Which is an innovative technological solution providing corporate performance and socio-environmental impact indicators so that users can define tangible, transparent and ethical action strategies aimed at sustainable development. With the TransformAction platform, companies can manage more closely to the ESG agenda, guaranteeing a better market position, more assertive strategies, effective process control and intelligent decisions.
- Solution 2: Which is a global group of ecovillages with an ecological, social, rescue, empowerment and protagonist character, with opportunities to build personal autonomy. The aim is to create 30 ecovillages by 2030 to bring this process to life.

As Myranda explains, the firm is embodiment of ecological, social and governance action to enable a better quality of life for people in vulnerable and non-vulnerable positions.

"The idea is to promote harmony and dignity through citizenship and sustainability, right? So we really want to make a positive impact only if it's a positive environmental impact by building five arch-villages by 2030, so what we thought was that we wanted to develop an ecovillage model through a pilot ward and develop a social franchise model, right? So we're going to produce implementation manuals on how to make this pupil where they can be anywhere in the world so that they respect their local characteristics, but have a corporate identity, a great code of ethics, a visual standardization and really have the strength to market the products that are produced within these ecovillages, which will provide sustenance."

The creation of the startup began to germinate in 2013 following the protests in June of that year. At that time, a series of mass mobilizations took place simultaneously in over 500 Brazilian cities. Deeply affected by these social movements, Myranda began to question her vision of the world and Brazilian society. She decided to go to the state of Rio de Janeiro to help people in difficulty.

"I think I can first start by telling you how the idea came about, which I think is more fundamental and better, so it's from 2013, when I left Porto Alegre, I was at a critical moment, I was having an anxiety crisis, a lot of very intimate and emotional issues, and I went on a journey that was also very spiritual, I went to the streets and got to know Andarilho very well. For a week, I had a backpack, I was able to start another life and get to know another purpose, from Rio Grande do Sul to Rio de Janeiro."

Implemented this desire for freedom, but above all to act respecting the principles of democracy, justice and liberty, the idea continued to germinate. In 2019 Myranda won the UN prize for a UNESCO program co-organized with the Goi Peace Foundation, Stiftung Entrepreneurship e Digital Experts United. On the strength of this success, she decided to turn her idea into reality.

The company currently operates in Brazil, in the state of Rio de Janeiro. The main resources used by the team consist of 3 people: Myranda as founder and CEO of the company. Another employee deals with environmental management, and the last member of the team looks after the social aspect of the company.

In terms of financing, although the firm has succeeded in attracting resources thanks to international awards, the company is not yet financially sustainable. Lais herself is well aware of this, as it is the moral and financial support of her family and friends that enables her to devote herself full-time to her business.

"My parents have always encouraged me to carry on, I understand my experience. I understand that I'm a privileged white middle-class woman who has access to countless possibilities. values that they passed on to me, I'm going to use all these benefits of all these privileges that are also engraved for people who don't have these opportunities..."

- **Business D**

Business D is a start-up enabling online teleconsultation and remote health monitoring, carried out via a platform and application in a non-hospital environment. The firm operates thanks to a team of clinical pharmacists who carry out integrated remote health monitoring, in a humanized way, through our own digital platform, enabling the beneficiary to access care remotely.

"[Business D] is an innovative platform that provides the extension of medical and hospital care related to pharmacotherapy and integral health, in a humanized, remote and personalized way, with agility and availability, increasing patient safety and the quality of the service provided throughout the health ecosystem."

It is a continuation of her academic career. Sonia has been working in the telepharmaceutical sector since 2007. In 2008, she published her first scientific journal in this field, receiving positive reviews for her work. Her work is inspired by astronauts' teleconsultations. As she explains, due to physical distance, astronauts only have access to remote consultations. With this in mind, she decided to transpose the principle of telehealth to telepharmacy. In 2013, a student sent her work to the ISFTEH - International Society for Telemedicine & eHealth project, which received an award at the time and became the subject of her PhD.

However, the real turning point occurs in 2019. Sonia is dismissed from her position as Associate Professor at PURCS. Following this dismissal, she decided to create her business in January 2020 while continuing her post-doctorate in telecare and pharmaceutical consulting.

In 2022, Business D was one of 159 Latin American startups recognized among 1209 startups registered in 25 countries as a positive impact startup, receiving the Selo Impact 2022. Thanks to this award, the company has been recognized as an innovative and social startup with a social impact in numbers 3, 5 and 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

As far as resources are concerned, the team is made up of Sonia and another pharmacist for consultations, and from an organizational point of view, one person specializing in IT and another in marketing.

Business D is a start-up with a national impact, operating mainly in the regions of Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Goiás, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro and Espírito Santo.

In terms of financing, Sonia manages to earn a living from her consultations, but also relies on her savings. However, she admits that her husband's financial support helps a great deal with day-to-day expenses.

"And if it wasn't for my husband, I don't know why my husband paid 90% of the bills, right? If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have made it, you know? [...], he doesn't give anything (to the company), but he takes away my worries, for example, about paying for things at home, right? So he pays the condominium. We live in an apartment and he takes on a lot of the expenses, you know? And a lot of moral support, but not from the company. He just tries to help me, I mean, I'm upset. You know? And he's a good partner, so he doesn't just go off and it'll work out, he makes things work it out."

- **Business E**

Business E is an application specializing in family well-being, with the aim of looking after the well-being of children and family relationships. It is made up of people who live and breathe childcare on a daily basis. As Caroline explains:

"We see [Business E] as an app that fits in as a healthtech because of its impact on the psychological well-being of families. But what I see as really important about Zelle is that the greatest impact is made by people who don't use the app, namely their children. So it's the parents who use it. But the ones who benefit most from the tool are the children, who won't be in the middle of a more conflictive family relationship."

The app includes features such as a diary to keep track of the child's appointments, an area for storing copies of documents such as ID cards and birth certificates, as

well as basic information about the child, such as number of shoes and clothing size. More recently, the start-up has launched health-related functionalities, such as a notebook that collects all information relating to children's well-being.

The idea for the company came at a key moment in Caroline's life. After 16 years of marriage, the future entrepreneur and architect separated from her husband and the father of her two children. What followed was a complete reorganization of the habits of the entrepreneur-to-be. Frustrated by having to keep in touch with her ex-husband while trying to rebuild her life, Caroline tried to find a solution on the Internet that would enable her to share important information without being continually obliged to communicate with her former partner, but without finding a solution.

"She [Business E] actually came about as a result of my experience of divorce and shared custody. I separated in 2017, when I was still working as an architect. And then, at the time of the divorce, I felt the need to have a tool in which I could put the children's information and my ex-husband could receive it, so we didn't have to talk all the time like we used to. So I went to Google to do some research and found nothing, and that's when [Business E] story came about, but that's basically it."

Although the idea was already there, it would take another two years, until 2019, for the firm to see the light of day. During this period, Aline weighed up the pros and cons of entrepreneurship and decided to take the plunge.

Beside Caroline, the executive team of the company is made up of two partners, one from the technology side as a developer, the other specializing in project management. In addition to this core group, other people have been added from innovation programs such as the InovAtiva Brasil innovation program in 2021. As a finalist in the healthcare sector, this experience has enabled the company to make contact with startups from outside our ecosystem. The company currently has 17 employees.

As far as financing is concerned, the company receives investments thanks to its membership of the incubator CEI UFRGS, but also to the subscription system set up to access the services of the startup. The application can register up to six children

per user, each of whom has ten connections able to access their information. The platform offers a free 30-day trial period, followed by two packages: monthly (R\$14.90) and annual (R\$119.90).

4.2. Challenges

In this section, we will examine the challenges faced by social entrepreneurs from the inception of their businesses to the present day. The idea is to analyze whether business founders have been able to overcome these challenges, and what indications there are concerning the latter.

4.2.1. comparative analysis of challenges encountered in literature and interviews

Taking into account the literature review previously carried out, we noted 3 main challenges for women social entrepreneurs, namely: (1)The affirmation in front of negative socio-cultural values (2)Difficult access to market (3) Difficulty in reconciling family and professional life. In this section, we will discuss whether there is indeed a correlation between the literature and the empirical analysis carried out.

- The affirmation in front of negative socio-cultural values

Taking into consideration the sentences used in the first part, we noted that women tended to question their managerial abilities, due to patriarchal pressure. "We can observe a lack of confidence in women social entrepreneurs. A constant questioning of their ability and their legitimacy in front of other male and older entrepreneurs." (p.32).

However, by analyzing the various interviews, we can see that legitimacy is present, and women entrepreneurs make sure not to let themselves be overwhelmed by these social negations. Clara (Business A), for example, explains that as an LGBTQIA woman, she is very sensitive to the issue of gender equality, and is aware that this can represent an additional social barrier. Nevertheless, she is determined to move forward despite the fear of failure and prejudice.

"There's a phrase I like, which says that bravery consists in going on even when you're afraid, so obviously I'm afraid. I'm afraid of failing, aren't I? I don't want it to go wrong, but if I don't do it, who will? We sweat, we cry, but we go for it."

We can see that these women are aware that entrepreneurship and setting up a business is still a male domain, but instead of seeing this as a weakness, they manage to draw motivation from it. Miranda (Business C) seems to explain this ardor and deep willingness to follow her convictions by intrinsic qualities.

"But because I'm curious, optimistic, determined and a bit of a rebel, it's also part of my personality. I think it's something we learn too, and it's one of the reasons I started this company, one of our audiences being women who suffer from domestic violence. They want to do it, but they've got nowhere else to go, so I offer them the chance to be their own boss".

This resilience can be seen not only in the creation of their companies, but also in their personal careers. By way of illustration, Sonia (Business D), by virtue of her former profession, was often the only woman in the scientific world. In her other life, she admits to having had to deal with "subtle" remarks about being a single woman and traveling to these seminars. Despite this, Marlise remains unaffected by these preconceptions about her.

"But I'm persistent because when I started working with Space Pharmacy, I was the only one in Brazil. Then, apart from me in Brazil, there was Nasa, there was nobody else working in this field, and then it evolved, and I did my PhD at King's College of London in the pharmacy department. My thesis was the first in the field of space pharmacy."

Another aspect to consider is the fact that they are pioneers who go against the status quo. As social entrepreneurs, they act to address the well-being and social value added by their businesses, and this is reflected in the way they approach these challenges, i.e. to create and develop in a system that unfortunately does not fully value them, either as entrepreneurs or as women.

This heroic vision of the social entrepreneur taking on the world with bravery needs to be qualified. Indeed, many of the interviewees remain aware of the limitations they face. Caroline (Business E), for example, is aware that there are still cognitive

properties to the world of innovation and being a man, that he has this idea that a man is more pragmatic, that he will direct his work with a much more advanced leadership than a woman, and that implicitly he is a better entrepreneur, whether in the social or classical field.

"The innovation ecosystem is very collaborative, but it's predominantly male. We end up feeling a bit disoriented because we're in a more masculine environment, not that there's explicit sexism or anything, but, for example, the majority of investors are men. They see with better eyes. When it's a man's tool, leadership is more male-oriented, which is another thing we've noticed a lot.

Sandra (Business B) also supports this view that men are more pragmatic, more reasoning, and that women see things as a whole and are much more aggregative. She adds that it's important to feel good, not only for oneself but also for others.

"The woman looks at the big picture and I like to say that, don't I? Anyway, most of them are very aggregative, [...] I'm going to work for a company, but it doesn't have to be good just for me. In fact, it has to be good for me, but it's good for everyone, isn't it? "

As we can see, there is a plurality of interpretations of women in social entrepreneurship, as well as difficulties in anchoring themselves in a system with negative values.

- Difficult access to market

As we can see, the social entrepreneurship market is still in full development in Brazil. This quest for development can be seen in the sources of financing used by entrepreneurs. For many, financial development remains a complex task. Clara tells us that, for the time being, her business does not allow her to earn a comfortable living, and that it is thanks to her associate's remuneration that she is able to maintain a salary. Bootstrapping, i.e. a situation in which an entrepreneur sets up a business with little capital, relying on funds other than outside investment, i.e. from his or her personal finances or from the operating income of the new business (Startupedia, 2023).

Sandra supports herself through a second job as an innovation consultant. Although she explains that her side activities allow her the time she needs for her business, she agrees that the accumulation of two professional activities remains complex to manage.

Sonia also explains that the funds generated by her business are not yet sufficient for her to live on. In addition to the income generated by her business, she needs her savings, and her husband provides her with financial support for the common expenses associated with the apartment (rent, etc.). Caroline, however, is now able to live completely on the income from her business and the investment funds and incubators she is part of.

The difficulty of achieving stability can be seen as a difficulty in sustaining the economic system of each social enterprise. However, we can also point out that it may be a matter of each entrepreneur's own desire not to use external funds. As they explain, Sonia and Sandra, respectively, chose not to use investment funds to maintain control over their enterprise.

The notion of investment and market access remains intrinsic. Even if the purpose of a social enterprise is not to make a profit, it remains a key to its success. Despite the profound socio-environmental aspect of her company, Myriam admits that financial self-sufficiency remains a key objective.

It's been explained to me that you have to think in business terms, right? So there's profitability, financial self-sufficiency. So the idea of starting a business was a strategic question of thinking about the success of the business, so that it actually happens."

In terms of market accessibility, the network aspect is also important. During the interviews, 5 of the entrepreneurs admitted to having taken part in acceleration programs, start-up incubators or been part of a network of women entrepreneurs.

In fact, all the interviewees belong to the LadiesinTech network. LadiesinTech is an institute whose aim is to encourage, support and promote female entrepreneurship in the field of technology. Ladies In Tech functions as a research and support group for

women working in start-ups. Exchanges take place through events and an exclusive WhatsApp group for participants, featuring information, advice, pointers and notes on the startup ecosystem.

As they explain, being part of a support network gives them emotional and practical help in the complex task of entrepreneurship. Ladies in Tech's aim is to create a space for sharing and solidarity between women entrepreneurs. The initiative currently brings together over 80 women and more than 40 start-ups, demonstrating the interest that exists in the field. Clara, a member of the network, explains :

"I was already in the world of corporate innovation when I met the girls (Ladies In Tech)It was really nice because nobody in my family put my sister aside, in a way, but in general, everybody has a steady job, so there weren't a lot of people to talk to, to have that conversation about the business, you know, how are sales, how did you handle that problem? It's been difficult for you too ?."

Thus, the challenge of accessing markets is a process that takes into account several aspects, such as financing and exposure, to which companies have access through various means such as accelerator programs, incubators or solidarity network groups like LadiesInTech.

- Difficulty in reconciling family and professional life

The issue of reconciling professional and family success is a key one for women social entrepreneurs. Of the 5 people interviewed, 2 have children (Caroline and Sandra), 2 are in a couple or married (Miranda and Sonia). Although the last interviewee (Clara) is neither married nor in a couple, her family remains a major pillar in her life.

Regarding the impact of family life on her business, Caroline highlights the difficulty of reconciling the two.

"From my point of view, it's a question of women's gender. We have children, I'm still able to devote myself exclusively to the startup, but my partners can't. [...] I still have a family structure that allows me to do that. And then there are a lot of prejudices. If you have to provide for a family and not devote yourself exclusively to things that young men can easily do, or even if they have

children, it's not their responsibility to look after the children, it's much easier to attract investment to be in the market and so the wheel turns."

As we can see, the concept of women taking care of children is still very much alive in today's society. Sandra shares a similar opinion on the subject. As she points out, men are favored by an example that encourages and supports them in their entrepreneurial endeavors.

"And in the market, it's much easier for a man to get a business appointment. It's much easier for a man to have the time and availability because he leaves the house, his wife usually takes care of the house, the kids, the market, all that, and when he arrives, everything is ready, isn't it?"

As mothers, they highlight the mental burden that falls on women to look after themselves. This unpaid and often unrewarded work highlights the patriarchal dominance to which contemporary society continues to be subject. Conversely, when a woman decides to prioritize her professional career to the detriment of her life, or to prioritize professional choices such as staying at the office late at night, she will be designated as a "careerist" or a "miser of success".

This reality is intertwined with another problem that entrepreneurs may face: the lack of family support from those close to them is another difficulty to be taken into account. Although none of the people interviewed experienced any hostile behavior to the decision to become an entrepreneur, the notion of entourage is a key factor.

Laís explains that the fact that her parents encourage her in these projects is a source of motivation for her and pushes her to give her best. As for Sonia, she explains that her husband's moral support in the face of the trials and tribulations of entrepreneurship is a relief that enables her to devote herself full-time to her business.

The family nucleus is thus an element of great importance in the motivations but also in the challenges linked to entrepreneurship. Indeed, Caroline is a prime example of someone who has drawn on her family to create her business. "Business E" was

born out of a desire to protect/look after the people she holds most dear in the world, her children.

In this way, the family is a powerful catalyst that can provide immense inspiration for the creation of a project when it brings a positive vibe and supports the project, or, when it doesn't, a powerful brake on the entrepreneur's professional activities.

4.2.2. The solutions provided

As far as solutions are concerned, there is no consensus on the standards to be applied to the above-mentioned challenges. In this section, each of the social entrepreneurs discusses possible solutions to the challenges they face. These are not necessarily established solutions, but improvements to be taken into consideration to make the conditions for social entrepreneurship fairer and more accessible.

- **Business A**

In terms of solutions, Clara sincerely believes that education is the way forward. As she explains, she only became interested in entrepreneurship after completing her degree. Until then, the world of innovation and the choices that flowed from it were all the more abstract. The task of educating young people from secondary school onwards, using popularization tools such as scientific journals and educational reports, as well as setting up seminars with social or traditional entrepreneurs, will enable us to demolish any strongholds on this subject. The aim is to help change mentalities while gradually explaining the key aspects of entrepreneurship, such as network development and the application of creativity in these fields.

“But now I think about myself as a kid, as a teenager or as a student. I had a lot of knowledge about the world of start-ups, innovation, a little bit, so if there was some kind of program, but it's not effective in really bringing innovation, technology, business, since I was a kid, you know, into schools, education, so

we only think about entrepreneurship out of necessity because I really need to survive. Or because you've finished your degree and you want to own a business. If I'd been encouraged earlier, I think it would have been better too."

- **Business B**

For Sandra, the issue of bureaucracy is a serious problem for the well-being of social entrepreneurs. As she explains, there are acceleration programs in Brazil such as SEBRAE. However, despite these incentives from both the private and public sectors, she notes a disconnect between the expectations of these institutions and the reality of the pain of being an entrepreneur.

"To get out of the bureaucratic world of understanding, but reality comes into the world of entrepreneurs, and before you say there are grant offers there are actually thousands that 90% of small businesses won't be able to fit in, you have to think about How can I do it? What's the pain these entrepreneurs are in, what do they need, what do they have today? Because they're asking for a lot of data on certifications that sometimes you don't have."

For her, reality comes from the real world, from what people experience on a daily basis in their work as social entrepreneurs. For her, organizations first need to break down this mirror between representation, the imaginary of entrepreneurship and reality.

- **Business C**

Miranda explains that there are many acceleration programs to help social entrepreneurs in general. During the interview, she highlights the Innovative Impact Program (Programa Inovativa de Impacto), a government program aimed at companies with a socio-environmental and developmental purpose. It generally involves a strong acceleration with mentoring, knowledge and networking. She reveals that it's not really financial resources they're encouraging, but rather a system for connecting people and ideas. However, she assures us that it's a great help for young companies in search of development and knowledge.

Despite these programs and this help from the government, Laís explains that there is still a long way to go. One of the things we need to work on is reducing greed and increasing the ambition of the programs put in place by public managers.

"They're (greed and ambition) not synonymous. In fact, we need ambition to think about long-term things that can really transform the problem and that greed values people who want short-term results with big gains at the expense of others. I think that's where the main problem lies."

The issue of supporting social enterprises regardless of the growth model remains important to her.

- **Business D**

Sonia also addresses the issue of state subsidy programs (edital in Portuguese) to help social entrepreneurs in their endeavors. However, what remains most important for her is that organizations, and especially politics, must be independent of social entrepreneurship. The purpose of accelerator programs must not be solely to enrich or benefit them, but to benefit the population. In this way, Sonia emphasizes that political decisions must not impact on the social interests of companies.

- **Business E**

In terms of solutions to challenges, Caroline takes a more personal approach. In her view, although public authorities and organizations are important, there is also work that the entrepreneur must do intrinsically. As she explains, the entrepreneurial journey remains a journey that enables the entrepreneur to mature as a business leader, but above all as a person. Resilience, self-sacrifice and perseverance are the keys to success.

"Studying all the time, paying attention to how other women and even other men who are much more advanced position themselves, how they communicate, how they act in difficult moments. I think there's this whole question of personal evolution as a leader, because I can only go further if I really evolve, if I continue to be the same Aline who started at the beginning, Zelle won't grow, and I see that's exactly the direction we want to take with the application. I also have to evolve as a leader at the head of the startup, I

have to be open to listening to negative feedback just as much as I have to be open to listening to positive feedback."

Although public authorities play a major role in implementing solutions for women's social entrepreneurship, it's clear that each entrepreneur's journey is the result of an internal path combining opportunities and awareness of challenges.

5. Final considerations

The context of women's social entrepreneurship brings to the fore not only the essence of social entrepreneurship, but also the question of feminism, emancipation and the evolution of women. Throughout this analysis, we've emphasized that, by virtue of her gender, a woman must incorporate into her role as a social agent aspects such as conformism and machismo in a society that is uncomfortable with a professionally successful woman. The social aspect is always present, however, as women social entrepreneurs become aware of their involvement in society through entrepreneurial activity aimed at solving a social or environmental problem through a viable economic project.

However, while women are filling all their entrepreneurial boxes, both in their approach to business and in their thinking systems, the gender issue remains considerable.

Indeed, whether in classic female entrepreneurship, there appear to be similarities in certain entrepreneurial aspects, notably in the challenges they face. For instance, affirmation in front of negative socio-cultural values, the difficulty of access and the Difficulty in reconciling family and professional life are challenges that appear in both types of entrepreneurship.

Nevertheless, we shouldn't fall into the trap of generalizing and categorizing all the challenges faced by women social and classical entrepreneurs as being the same. Throughout the interviews, multiple ways of thinking about and positioning women as social entrepreneurs emerged. In reality, the question of challenges has more to do with each person's perception of the difficulties they face. Each individual has distinct characteristics that make him or her unique when it comes to apprehending challenges, regardless of gender. Aspects such as family situation and age must also be taken into account in the analysis. For example, the family factor can be a source of extreme motivation for the social entrepreneur, or an obstacle to professional fulfillment.

In reality, the challenges they face are not necessarily specific to them, but highlight a social, historical, economic and political context that together form a paradigm in which they must navigate. In addition, political institutions play a major role in the expansion of women's rights, and especially those of social entrepreneurs, in Brazil. As we observed during our survey, the Brazilian government, but more generally, still needs to work on its way of conceiving social entrepreneurship first, to then understand and appreciate its specificities.

We also need to raise awareness, notably through popularization and accessibility, in order to understand more clearly what social impact means. These steps will bring about changes in mentalities that will lead to real progress in knowledge of the specificities of women's social entrepreneurship.

It is clear that there are limitations to this work, particularly with regard to the internal motivations of individual female social entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, this work presents a faithful vision of women's entrepreneurship, and highlights the challenges they face with diligence. The aim of this concluding paper is to encourage all women social entrepreneurs. Indeed, despite the adversity they face, their strength, self-sacrifice and, above all, their profound optimism, never cease and remain a deep source of inspiration for anyone, of any gender, involved in social entrepreneurship.

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APPENDIX A : Interview guide for female social entrepreneurs

Tema	perguntas
<p>Sobre empreendedor social</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nome / idade - Qual foi sua trajetória até decidir se tornar um empreendedor (educação e experiência anterior)? - Quais são suas três qualidades principais
<p>Com relação a empresa de impacto social</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Como surgiu a ideia? - Qual é o campo de atividade da sua empresa / Você pode me explicar em suas próprias palavras o objetivo de sua Startup - Qual é o problema que sua startup está tentando resolver (como / quais são as soluções fornecidas?) - Quem é o alvo da empresa (beneficiários)? Existe uma história prévia com eles? - Quais são os principais recursos utilizados? E os parceiros? - Fontes de financiamento: quais são as fontes de financiamento inicial? Como você tem se monetizado hoje? Quais são os principais custos? - Como você vê o impacto potencial da sua startup ?

A visão da mulher como empreendedora social / empresaria de negócio de impacto social

- Na sua opinião, quais são as diferenças entre homens e mulheres na forma como dirigem um negócio social?
- A criação de sua empresa foi influenciada pelo fato de você ser uma mulher?
- Você já teve sua legitimidade como CEO e Sócia Fundadora questionada?

Desafios ligados ao facto de ser uma mulher como empreendedora social / empresaria de negócio de impacto social

- Quais foram os principais problemas encontrados na criação e desenvolvimento do negócio?
- Você enfrentou algum desafio específico por ser uma mulher empreendedora social?
- Como eles foram superados?
- Você acha que estes desafios são similares a todas as mulheres empreendedoras? que elas sejam ou não no campo do empreendedorismo social (negócio social) ?
- Existem leis, programas que foram implementados pelo governo ou instituição privada para apoiar as mulheres empreendedoras sociais ou empreendedoras sociais em geral?
- Quais seriam as suas sugestões para gestores públicos e organizações privadas para ações e programas na área do empreendedorismo?