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EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN VULNERABLE CONTEXTS: OUTCOMES OF A CAPACITY-BUILDING AND ADVISORY INTERVENTION IN COSTA RICA

Abstract:

Women entrepreneurs in vulnerable contexts face a range of structural, economic, and socio-cultural barriers that limit the sustainability of their businesses and their personal empowerment. This paper presents the results of a comprehensive intervention—designed under the project “Virtual Platform and Strengthening of Women’s Social Economy Initiatives”—that targeted 29 women entrepreneurs across various regions of Costa Rica. The program included training workshops, individualized mentoring, and strategic business advisory.

Using a mixed-method approach, this study assesses the effectiveness of the intervention through a comparative technical evaluation of pre- and post-intervention outcomes. Improvements were observed in areas such as financial management, business planning, product pricing, and technological adoption. However, persistent challenges were also identified, including formalization hurdles and digital literacy gaps. Drawing on Empowerment Theory, the paper explores how tailored support programs can foster transformative learning, agency, and economic inclusion among marginalized women. Policy implications for scaling inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems are also discussed.

Keywords:

Women entrepreneurship, empowerment, social vulnerability, business training, Costa Rica

JEL Classification: A10, A13