

Experience report

Operação Rondon Paraná 2023: nursing students' experience report

Operação Rondon Paraná 2023: relato de experiência de estudantes de enfermagem
Operação Rondon Paraná 2023: relato de experiencia de estudiantes de enfermería

Heitor Hortensi Sesnik¹, **Gabriel Zanin Sanguino¹**,
Larissa Carolina Segantini Felipin¹, **Jhennifer Galassi Bortoloci¹**,
Esdra Cristina Pereira Goldoni¹, **Sueli Mutsumi Tsukuda Ichisato¹**

¹ Universidade Estadual de Maringá, Maringá, Paraná, Brazil

Abstract

Objective: to report the experience of the participation of nursing students from a Public Higher Education Institution in northwestern Paraná in *Operação Rondon Paraná 2023*. **Method:** an experience report of two undergraduate students and one graduate nursing student, who developed actions in Pontal do Paraná, in October 2023. **Results:** the students developed 22 actions during 12 days of *Operação Rondon*, using multiple methodologies and encompassing teamwork and interprofessional work, bringing them closer to different social and cultural spheres. **Conclusion:** the operation enabled the technical, personal and professional development of university students, in addition to fulfilling the objectives, which were based on promoting university extension actions in different realities from those in which the university is inserted. Furthermore, it is understood that there is a need for work such as that developed in such an operation so that other university students and communities can benefit from the benefits it promotes.

Descriptors: Patient Care Team; Universities; Interprofessional Education; Population Education; Nursing, Students

Resumo

Objetivo: relatar a experiência da participação de estudantes de enfermagem de uma Instituição Pública de Ensino Superior do Noroeste do Paraná na Operação Rondon Paraná 2023. **Método:** relato de experiência de dois estudantes de graduação e um estudante de pós-graduação em enfermagem, que desenvolveram ações em Pontal do Paraná, em outubro de 2023. **Resultados:** os estudantes desenvolveram 22 ações durante 12 dias de Operação Rondon, utilizando múltiplas metodologias e abrangendo o trabalho em equipe e interprofissional, aproximando-os de diversas esferas sociais e culturais. **Conclusão:** a operação possibilitou o desenvolvimento técnico, pessoal e profissional dos universitários, além do cumprimento dos objetivos, que eram pautados em promover ações de extensão universitária em realidades distintas das quais a

universidade está inserida. Ainda, compreende-se a necessidade de trabalhos como os desenvolvidos em tal operação, para que outros universitários e comunidades possam ser contemplados com os benefícios que essa promove.

Descritores: Equipe de Assistência ao Paciente; Universidades; Educação Interprofissional; Educação da População; Estudantes de Enfermagem

Resumen

Objetivo: relatar la experiencia de participación de estudiantes de enfermería de una Institución Pública de Educación Superior del Noroeste de Paraná en la Operación Rondon Paraná 2023.

Método: relatar la experiencia de dos estudiantes de pregrado y un estudiante de posgrado en enfermería, que desarrollaron acciones en Pontal do Paraná, en octubre de 2023. **Resultados:** los estudiantes desarrollaron 22 acciones durante 12 días de Operación Rondon, utilizando múltiples metodologías y abarcando el trabajo en equipo e interprofesional, acercándolos a diferentes ámbitos sociales y culturales. **Conclusión:** la operación permitió el desarrollo técnico, personal y profesional de los estudiantes universitarios, además del cumplimiento de los objetivos, los cuales se basaron en promover acciones de extensión universitaria en las diferentes realidades en las que se ubica la universidad. Además, se entiende la necesidad de un trabajo como el que se realiza en tal operación, para que otros estudiantes universitarios y comunidades puedan beneficiarse de los beneficios que esta operación promueve.

Descriptor: Grupo de Atención al Paciente; Universidades; Educación Interprofesional; Educación de la Población; Estudiantes de Enfermería

Introduction

Projeto Rondon, conceived by the Federal Government in 1966, had the purpose of taking the university to places that needed improvements in social well-being and training in public management through extension actions. *Projeto Rondon* was named in honor of engineer and explorer Marshal Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon.¹ The first operation, called Operation Zero, took place in 1967, with the aim of providing medical assistance, carrying out surveys and research in Rondônia.² This project lasted until mid-1989, when it was terminated by a provisional measure.³

In 2003, the Ministry of Defense, together with other ministries (Agriculture, Livestock and Supply, Education, Citizenship, Health and Environment), reactivated this proposal, focusing on the North and Northeast regions of the country, in order to meet local demands, in addition to contemplating the development of awareness focused on citizenship, social responsibility and promotion of national interests.⁴

Based on the national proposal, *Operação Rondon Paraná* was established as a government action in 2023, and is coordinated by the Department of Science, Technology and Higher Education (In Portuguese, *Secretaria da Ciência, Tecnologia e Ensino Superior* - SETI). It is configured as an extension action, with the support of the State Government, in conjunction with the seven state universities of Paraná, with the objective of complementing the professional training of university students, focusing on current issues, such as social responsibility and sustainability, in order to develop extension actions in locations where the Human Development Index (HDI) is low.⁵ Concerning the Ministry of Defense's proposal, participation in *Operação Rondon Paraná* is limited to professors and university students who have completed at least two years of undergraduate studies. The institution's announcement, in turn, included the participation of graduate students, recognizing the prior interest expressed by these individuals, thus diverging from the national proposal.⁶⁻⁷

It is important to note that university extension is characterized as an insertion of the academic community (professors, technicians, students) outside the university by allowing the exchange and construction of knowledge as well as observation and immersion in new realities.⁸⁻⁹ Thus, it is observed that the implementation of extension practices is important so that society benefits from the service.¹⁰⁻¹¹

For nursing students, university extension plays a fundamental role in professional training, since contact with different realities can foster and diversify knowledge in fields of activity.¹²⁻¹⁴ Based on this circumstance, the inclusion of students in extension practices reflects in the construction of qualified professionals capable of mediating knowledge, developing social interactions and also reducing inequality and social exclusion, objectives that are anchored in *Operação Rondon Paraná 2023*.^{5,15}

Internationally, it is clear that community engagement and education are based on the same perspectives employed in Brazil,^{8-12,14} since they have as extension objectives the strengthening of educational strategies, support for students in establishing relationships with the community, development of guidelines for communication among students, professors and the community, and the reduction of social disparities.¹⁶

This study aimed to report the experience of the participation of nursing students from a Public Higher Education Institution in northwestern Paraná in *Operação Rondon Paraná 2023*.

Method

This is an experience report about the participation of nursing students from a Public Higher Education Institution in northwestern Paraná in *Operação Rondon Paraná 2023*, developed in the municipality of Pontal do Paraná.

Operação Rondon Paraná involved 28 professors and 150 students from the state's seven state universities, such as *Universidade Estadual de Londrina* (UEL), *Universidade Estadual de Maringá* (UEM), *Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa* (UEPG), *Universidade Estadual do Oeste do Paraná* (UNIOESTE), *Universidade Estadual do Centro-Oeste* (UNICENTRO), *Universidade Estadual do Norte do Paraná* (UENP) and *Universidade Estadual do Paraná* (UNESPAR). The actions of each university were divided into two sets: set "A", with actions focused on topics that encompassed culture, human rights and justice, education, and health; and set "B", with topics related to communication, the environment, technology, and production and work.

The municipalities covered by *Operação Rondon Paraná* actions, located on the coast of the state, were Antonina, Guaratuba, Morretes, Paranaguá and Pontal do Paraná, and in the Metropolitan Region of Curitiba, Cerro Azul and Rio Branco do Sul.

Among the municipalities covered by the actions, Pontal do Paraná stands out, where this team operates. The municipality is located on the coast of the state of Paraná, with a territorial area of 200,410 km² and a population of 30,425 people. Moreover, it has 16 elementary and six high school institutions, with a 97.4% school enrollment rate for children aged 6 to 14 years and a Basic Education Development Index (BEDI) of 5.7 in the initial years and 5.4 in the final years of elementary school, ranking 264 in the state's BEDI ranking and 2,234 in the country.¹⁷

The practical experience took place between October 11 and 21, 2023, during the period in which *Operação Rondon Paraná 2023* took place. Those involved in this experience were the rapporteurs and the conductors of the experience, who will be called "*rondonistas*", the name given to participants of *Projeto Rondon*. This experience

report describes the experience of two undergraduate nursing students, both in their third year during the period in which *Operação Rondon* was carried out, and of a graduate student at the master's level.

As for ethical and legal aspects, the names of the individuals who participated in the actions were respected. Since this is a report of the experiences lived by reporters, the need for submission to a Research Ethics Committee was waived.

The selection of extension workers at UEM took place in two stages. Initially, registered candidates had to prepare a work proposal that was aligned with the objectives established in the call for applications for the desired group. Then, in the second stage, an interview was conducted to assess the skills of selected students. As a result of this process, the team coordinators and the institutional coordination selected 20 students for both groups A and B.

For group A, the following were selected: five nursing students, two from the second year and three from the third year; two social service students, one from the second year and one from the fourth year; one student from the social sciences course in the second year, who already had another degree in law; and two graduate students, one in nursing and the other in biomedicine. Group "A" was assigned to the municipality of Pontal do Paraná, whereas group "B" was assigned to the municipality of Paranaguá, with a total of 12 students from Rondônia for each group, including ten students and two professors.

After the results of the selection process were announced, online and in-person meetings were held to present *Operação Rondon Paraná 2023* as well as provide general information about the operation and clarifying any doubts that *rondonistas* might have.

Based on the topics related to group A, culture, human rights and justice, education, and health, the team implemented actions that connected these topics to the needs previously identified in the municipality of Pontal do Paraná during a preliminary trip carried out with the coordinators. Thus, the team's coordination developed a work plan, in which each student was in charge of developing the action according to the target audience, while the other *rondonistas* acted as support.

Results

Activities in the municipality of Pontal do Paraná reached approximately 1,500 people, and in the seven municipalities where *Operação Rondon* took place, at least 14,732 people were reached. In group "A", approximately 20 extension actions were carried out, and in the entire operation, 372 actions were implemented. In view of this, it can be seen that the objectives of guaranteeing quality education and bringing university students closer to vulnerable communities, which need attention and knowledge, through the development of extension actions, were undertaken.

The activities carried out by nursing students occurred mostly in the morning and afternoon, although three actions took place in the evening. Therefore, the preparation and review of actions took place prior to the trip, given students' demand for in-depth study of the subject to be addressed in line with the needs presented. After the period for preparing the work, a meeting was held to discuss the operationalization of actions in a group. Thus, 22 actions were developed, which used the following interaction approaches: group dynamics, workshops and awareness initiatives, all based on health education.

In total, 12 days were allocated for developing the operation, with two days for the teams' transportation. On October 10, the UEM *rondonistas* traveled to Curitiba, the capital of the state of Paraná, by bus, where the opening ceremony took place on the morning of the 11th. All 150 students and 28 professors stayed in a hotel near the event location. UNESPAR was responsible for providing the auditorium for the event. At this event, called the "Hat Ceremony", all students and professors were officially named "*rondonistas*". They all swore to comply with *Operação Rondon* objectives and rules. After the event was over, the *rondonistas* were sent to their respective municipalities, where they carried out the actions. During this period, nursing students were able to meet students and professors from other institutions, exchanging expectations and experiences about the upcoming operation.

On Thursday, October 12, the activities actually began. On this day, in the morning, there was to be an activity on the topic on "first aid in cases of drowning", which was to take place on the Praia de Leste waterfront, with pamphlets and

explanations on the subject. However, the activity was canceled due to weather conditions. Therefore, it was decided to record and present a video covering the main information that would be covered in the in-person activity, which was published on the municipality's advertising channels. In the afternoon, an activity was developed in conjunction with the UNICENTRO team, in an indigenous village, with the topic on "social networks and products in the digital market". In this activity, strategies were discussed on how indigenous people could sell their products as well as use digital resources for online payments. Furthermore, the residents of Rondônia were able to learn about the local culture and explore information about healthcare, food and education services.

On the second day of operation, the topic on "safe food on the beach" was proposed. However, still influenced by unfavorable weather conditions, it was necessary to make changes to the planning. In a joint action with the local team, the significant presence of children in the area was identified, and it was decided to address activities that would allow exploring the aspects of healthy growth and development of these children.

Additionally, because the activities planned for the first two days of the operation were centered on distributing pamphlets, a large number of guests were identified in the area where *rondonistas* were staying. As a result, some of these activities were partially carried out in this area. Interaction with the children allowed the nursing students to re-encounter topics covered in the classroom and apply them in a context and reality different from those they had previously experienced, applying previously acquired knowledge and carrying out health promotion actions.

The activities carried out on the third day took place in a fishing community in the municipality. The first activity was related to "skin cancer prevention" among fishermen, since the main economic activity is fishing, which results in prolonged exposure to the sun. Participants walked around the community with the aim of approaching residents and advising them on the importance of using sunscreen and other forms of protection. Pamphlets with information on the subject and bottles of sunscreen were distributed to fishermen.

Furthermore, the local population was invited during the walk to the second activity, which would take place in the afternoon and had the topic of “breast cancer prevention”. In this activity, through discussions and games with women, health education was addressed on the main signs and symptoms, and the importance of screening and early diagnosis. A group of approximately 40 people participated in the activities.

The inclusion of students in a fishing community provided a new experience for students in understanding and approaching a reality far from what they are used to.

On Sunday, the fourth day of operation, the activities proposed for the morning were “beach cleaning” and “raising awareness about the correct waste disposal”, which took place on the beaches. As weather conditions improved, a strategy was developed to divide the group into three groups, each with the leader of one of the activities that would have been carried out previously and had to be postponed.

Thus, in order to optimize actions and time, two more actions were carried out: first aid in cases of drowning; and safe eating on the beach. The public was well received, and the proposed objectives were achieved. In the afternoon, the teams traveled to a rural colony in the municipality to hold a workshop on the topic on “respect for human dignity and a focus on women”. On that day, the public was invited to participate by means of a walk through the community. Approximately 30 women participated.

On Monday, October 16, the fifth day of operations, actions were developed in the morning and afternoon. In the morning, a training session on “combating dengue fever for community health workers” was held with approximately 50 participants. In the afternoon, the topic on “domestic violence against children and adolescents” was addressed at a school in the municipality, with students and educators as the target audience. This activity allowed students to integrate knowledge from different areas for the training and continuing education of professionals working in the municipality, thus helping to improve health prevention activities.

On the sixth day, in the morning, a workshop on “adolescence pregnancy” was offered to adolescents from a state school in the city. In the afternoon, the audience included “pregnant women from the city” participating in a municipal guidance project on pregnancy/puerperium, with the topic on “encouraging breastfeeding (BF)”.

The benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and baby were explained and questions were answered. In addition, participants discussed the signs and symptoms to be observed in relation to breast cancer and how to perform the Heimlich maneuver, a first aid technique used to clear the airways of a person who is suffocating due to a total or partial blockage.

On the seventh day, an activity was held at the Social Assistance Reference Center with older adults to encourage physical exercise. During this activity, the population was given guidance on the benefits of physical activity and healthy eating for a good quality of life. In the afternoon, a discussion workshop was offered on the topic on “human rights and citizenship for marginalized communities”, open to the community in general, but focusing on a project taking place in the city that encompasses the topic. In the evening, with the topic on “professions and careers”, an intervention was held at a school in the city, with students from Youth and Adult Education, in order to guide the students on future careers, in addition to conducting a vocational test to identify possible areas of work.

On Thursday, October 19, actions were held at a Psychosocial Care Center, targeting drug users, sex workers and healthcare professionals with the topic on “harm reduction”. On this day, climate change hindered public participation; however, about ten people attended the workshop. Moreover, the residents of Rondônia had the opportunity to learn about how this healthcare service works in the municipality as well as identify the weaknesses that professionals face.

The second activity of the day took place at a municipal school for children with special needs, with workshops for inclusion. Activities were held to stimulate cognitive and motor development, such as painting, dancing, games and play. In the evening, *rondonistas* returned to the same school as the previous day, with the workshop on “professions and careers”, with the same target audience, in different classes from the previous day.

On the ninth day of the operation, in the morning, the team held a fun and educational game with adolescents about “sexual education” at a state school in the city. Approximately 80 adolescents participated. It was possible to observe the importance of the topic at this stage of life, since it is at this stage that sexual life begins. In the

afternoon, a “basic computer” course was offered to the young apprentices at a state school. At the end of the afternoon, a walk along the beachfront was held with the population, in order to promote connection and knowledge of the reality and local culture among the people of Rondônia and residents.

On the last day of the operation, a free day was reserved for *rondonistas*, and, in the evening, the closing ceremony was held, with the participation of artistic groups from the municipality, dance and music performances. Furthermore, a short film was shown with testimonies from *rondonistas* about the experience of *Operação Rondon*.

Furthermore, during the closing ceremony, UEM and UNICENTRO were responsible for developing a cultural activity. UEM, in partnership with a municipal school that assists children with special needs, presented a video of the school band, and UNICENTRO developed a dance and poetry show.

It is worth noting that, despite the difficulties encountered in carrying out some planned actions, such as weather conditions and low participation of participants, the partnership between *rondonistas* and local government bodies was important for implementing the activities, due to the assistance offered in transporting students throughout the municipality, the organization regarding participant well-being in relation to food and accommodation, and the coordination with people and professionals who facilitated the actions and brought students closer to the community.

Discussion

The development of extension activities for different target audiences made it possible to improve university students' ability to act professionally in different situations. In addition, experiencing different realities ensures critical and creative thinking as well as training professionals prepared to work in different places and roles. The unexpected adversities that arose during the operation provided opportunities for future nurses to develop skills to adapt to unplanned situations, thus achieving success in their interventions.

Extension activities allow the community to participate in taking responsibility for aspects related to their health, ensuring that healthcare professionals develop health promotion actions effectively. Thus, *Operação Rondon* allowed access to the community

through a path that considered an inclusive and accessible organizational process that offered support to the population.¹⁸

Nursing training in Brazil is guided by the Brazilian National Curricular Guidelines (In Portuguese, *Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais* - DCNs) for undergraduate nursing courses, which establish a professional profile centered on technical, scientific, ethical and humanistic skills. The DCNs recommend that nurses must be able to act critically and reflectively, focusing on comprehensive healthcare, promoting, preventing, recovering and rehabilitating the health of individuals and communities. In addition, training must include the development of management, leadership and communication skills, preparing professionals to work both in multidisciplinary teams and independently, based on science and technical rigor.¹⁹

Among the main characteristics that a nurse trained according to the guidelines must possess are the ability to make decisions, the competence for humanized and individualized care, and the ability to deal with complex health situations. Professionals demonstrate a commitment to health education and continuing education, keeping up to date with scientific and technological innovations that permeate healthcare practice. Professional ethics and respect for human rights are fundamental pillars of nurses' work, who must be prepared to face the social and cultural challenges present in the Brazilian healthcare system, promoting equity and social justice in care.¹⁹

Operação Rondon, therefore, through extension actions, allows nursing students to develop skills recommended by DCNs for nursing, with emphasis on leadership, a characteristic that is essential for students to meet educational, research and clinical practice demands in the health field.²⁰

The integration of nursing students with students from other areas was identified as a catalyst for their activities and training, favoring the development of professional skills that value interdisciplinarity, an essential characteristic in nursing practices. Teamwork is essential to prepare future nurses to act assertively and with skills that will allow them to solve complex problems in healthcare services.²¹

The autonomy of each student in preparing workshops and activities enabled developing the responsibility necessary for nursing practice, in addition to fostering the autonomy of future professionals. The participation of university students in *Operação*

Rondon Paraná 2023 had a positive impact on their conduct as future professionals. Therefore, participation and interaction with students and different realities enabled university students and the general public to build knowledge and autonomy in situations related to the thematic axes worked on.

Hence, nursing students had the opportunity to immerse themselves in topics that are often addressed in a limited way during undergraduate studies, in addition to developing the ability to become active agents in the learning process, taking a leading role in both the actions and methodologies applied in approaches with the population. The discussion about active learning, encouraging students to place themselves at the center of the learning process, has been discussed internationally,²²⁻²³ as it improves their conceptual understanding, their focus on instruction, and their critical thinking skills.

This study has limitations that include the lack of analysis of the long-term impacts of the extension actions carried out during *Operação Rondon Paraná 2023*, especially with regard to the social development and sustainability of communities assisted. Another limiting factor was the scope of the target audience, which required the implementation of educational methodologies to meet the needs expressed by the municipality. Additionally, adverse weather conditions, such as heavy rains, made it impossible to carry out some planned actions, and difficulties in transporting Rondon workers to the locations where the activities were carried out may also have interfered.

Nursing students' understanding of the complexity of university extension and its relevance also brought challenges to the development of activities. The training process prior to *Operação Rondon* was important to educate this public about their social responsibilities and the impacts that the actions developed could have on the community.

Finally, this report's contributions demonstrate the relevance of extension activities for the professional and personal development of students as well as for the promotion of health and citizenship in the communities assisted. Immersion in contexts different from those experienced in the traditional academic environment allowed developing interdisciplinary and interprofessional skills, in addition to providing an approximation to the reality of populations in situations of social vulnerability.

Furthermore, the actions developed in *Operação Rondon*, focused on contemporary topics such as social responsibility, sustainability and improvement of human development indicators, reinforce the value of university extension as an effective means of social transformation and promotion of collective well-being. This report therefore contributes to the deepening of discussions about the intersection between academic training and social responsibility of nurses, highlighting the need for continuity and expansion of initiatives such as *Operação Rondon* within public universities.

Conclusion

Through *Operação Rondon Paraná 2023*, it was possible to experience other realities outside the university and, by knowing them, the way students and professors act and think underwent changes, because, although participants take knowledge to the community, they also learn, making it possible to expand their skills in understanding cultural differences and adapt healthcare provision in each context.

Actions such as *Operação Rondon* are in line with the Brazilian Ministry of Education guidelines, which assist in the effective training of qualified nursing professionals who are able to act in response to the community's needs.

Finally, it is understood that there is a need for more actions so that not only other communities are covered, but also other university students have the opportunity to access a wide variety of knowledge and unique experiences during their training.

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Authorship contribution

1 – Heitor Hortensi Sesnik

Corresponding author

Nursing student – sesnikh@gmail.com

Research conception and/or development and/or manuscript writing; Review and approval of the final version

2 – Gabriel Zanin Sanguino

Nurse, PhD, Professor – gzsanguino2@uem.br

Research conception and/or development and/or manuscript writing; Review and approval of the final version

3 – Larissa Carolina Segantini Felipin

Nurse, PhD, Professor – lcsfelipin2@uem.br

Research conception and/or development and/or manuscript writing; Review and approval of the final version

4 – Jhennifer Galassi Bortoloci

Nurse, PhD student – jhennifergbortoloci@gmail.com

Research conception and/or development and/or manuscript writing; Review and approval of the final version

5 – Esdra Cristina Pereira Goldoni

Nursing student – esdragoldoni@gmail.com

Research conception and/or development and/or manuscript writing; Review and approval of the final version

6 – Sueli Mutsumi Tsukuda Ichisato

Nurse, PhD, Professor – sichisato@gmail.com

Research conception and/or development and/or manuscript writing; Review and approval of the final version

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