



Women that Bloom the Brazilian Northeastern Semi Arid

STORIES
OF WOMEN
PRODUCERS
SUPPORTED BY
FIDA PROJECTS IN
BRAZIL





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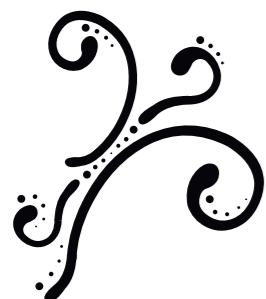
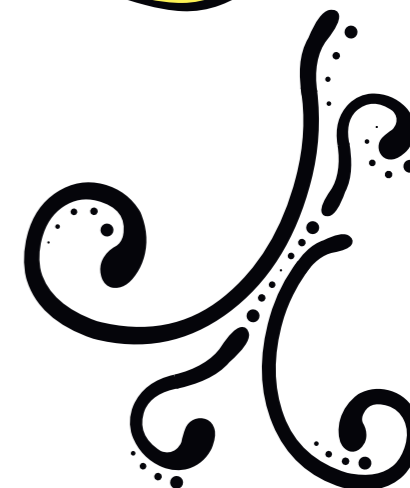
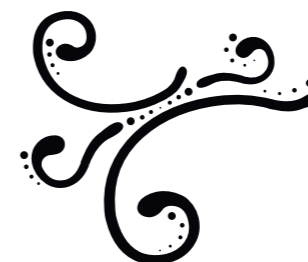
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FIDA's Performance in Brazil with Semear Internacional Program

The **International Fund for Agricultural Development (FIDA)**, an investment agency linked to the United Nations (UN) has rural development projects in partnership with state and federal governments in the Brazilian Northeast. Currently, six financing projects are active with focus on the development of productive projects to generate agricultural income, cooperativism, associativism and access to markets.

FIDA encourages actions that prioritizes the involvement of women, youth and traditional communities to increase income, promote food security and reduce the poverty of the beneficiary public in several states in the northeast region.

Simultaneously, FIDA seeks to perform actions not only for the productive development in the communities, but also to stimulate access to information through actions focused on knowledge, aiming to facilitate access to knowledge, innovations and good practices contextualized for the coexistence with the semi-arid.

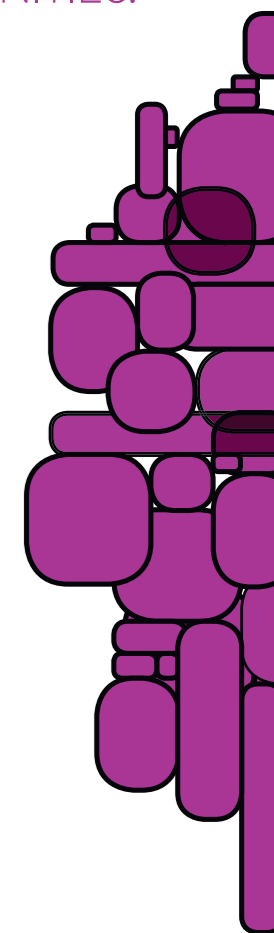
Thus, Semear Program was created and for acted through projects that promoted sustainable and equitable development in the region, supported by FIDA for six years.

With the success of Semear Program, a second phase was implemented: Semear Internacional. It focused on monitoring & evaluation, communication, knowledge management and South-South Cooperation, supporting its management in the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture(IICA).

The program has contributed significantly to the systematization and dissemination of good practices of FIDA projects at national and international level by exchanges with technicians and beneficiaries of projects, in addition to publications in print and digital format. Semear Internacional potentializes and makes visible the good practices of the six FIDA projects.

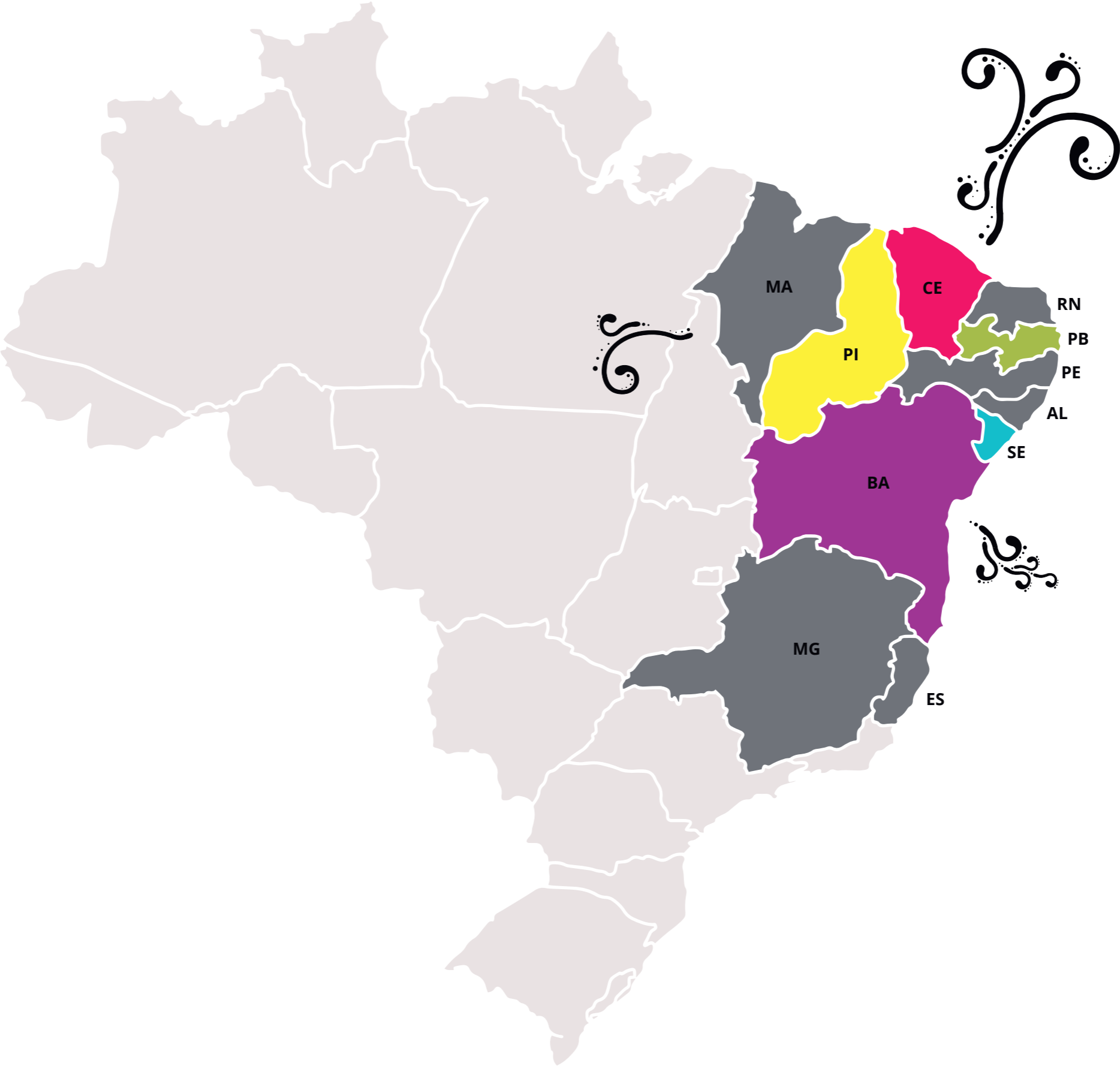








FIDA ENCOURAGES ACTIONS THAT PRIORITIZE THE INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES.



All the stories in this booklet are supported by the projects financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (FIDA) in the Brazilian Semi arid, with the support of Semear Internacional and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), which has worked to reinforce sustainable rural development initiatives, with women as the priority public. Currently, FIDA is a strategic partner in carrying out five projects of the following State governments through bilateral agreements: Paraíba (Project of sustainable Development of Cariri, Seridó and Curimataú-Procace), Bahia (Pró-Semiárido Project), Sergipe (Dom Távora Project), Piauí (Viva o Semiárido Project), Ceará (Paulo Freire Project); in addition to the Dom Hélder Câmara Project (PDHC) with the federal government, executed by the of Family Agriculture and Cooperativism (SAFC) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA), present in eleven states (Pernambuco, Ceará, Rio Grande do Norte, Alagoas, Bahia, Piauí, Paraíba, Sergipe, Maranhão and north of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo).





					
●	●	●	●	●	●
BAHIA	CEARÁ	PARAÍBA	PIAUÍ	SERGIPE	NE + MG + ES
70000 FAMILIES BENEFITED	60000 FAMILIES BENEFITED	18500 FAMILIES BENEFITED	22000 FAMILIES BENEFITED	12000 FAMILIES BENEFITED	74000 FAMILIES BENEFITED
FIDA RESOURCES FOR THE PROJECT US\$ 45.000.000	FIDA RESOURCES FOR THE PROJECT US\$ 32.200.000	FIDA RESOURCES FOR THE PROJECT US\$ 25.000.000	FIDA RESOURCES FOR THE PROJECT US\$ 20.000.000	FIDA RESOURCES FOR THE PROJECT US\$ 16.000.000	FIDA RESOURCES FOR THE PROJECT US\$ 3.000.000
+	+	+	+	+	+
US\$ 50.000.000 STATE GOVERNMENT RESOURCES	US\$ 39.820.000 STATE GOVERNMENT RESOURCES	US\$ 15.500.000 STATE GOVERNMENT RESOURCES	US\$ 12.700.000 STATE GOVERNMENT RESOURCES	US\$ 12.600.000 STATE GOVERNMENT RESOURCES	US\$ 82.000.000 STATE GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

2. Starting the Walk



2. Starting the Walk

Historically, the work done by women is undervalued and considered inferior and invisible. Housework and family care have been attributed as their responsibility, while the work seen as productive, carried out in the public world and paid in money, is seen as masculine. That is called sexual division of labor. However, real life is not like that: women are present in all sectors of society and accumulate various activities, but still live in invisibility and devaluation, in addition to work accumulation. Rural areas are peculiar: besides being the main responsible – most of the times – for the housework and family care, the woman is a land worker, who works for family's self-consumption and for the sustenance of the family economic dynamics.

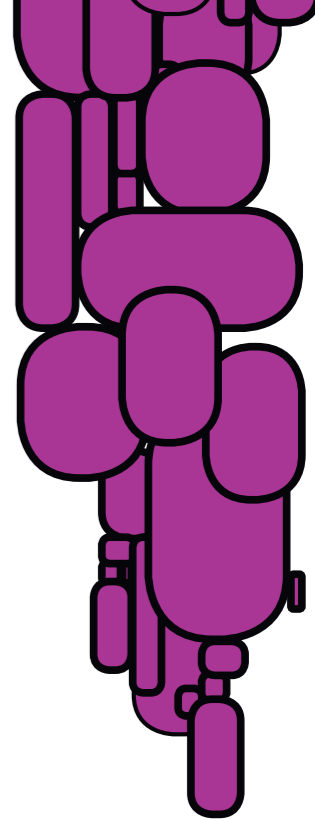
This booklet presents experiences of women (individual and collective) who have struggled to have their work recognized and valued, facing patriarchy and everyday sexism, and showing they can do any activity, generate income, change their realities and their respective communities. Women who fought, reinvented and encouraged others to build a world with freedom, justice, autonomy and equality between men and women. These are experiences of good practices of rural women in the search for income generation, sustainability and

nature conservation, political-social participation and coping with gender inequality and all forms of violence against women.

Looking at the reality of rural women living in the northeastern semi arid. It is even more challenging, but no less charming. Facing challenges, they present concrete and innovative responses. Against monoculture and limited visions, they show diversity and richness of cultures and lifestyles. In the fight against discrimination, oppression and inequality, they reveal strength, endurance, resilience and perseverance. In their routine they build agroecology, feminism, sovereignty and food security, living with the semiarid, valuing the richness of life, local biodiversity and people, believing that a better world is already happening.

In these different experiences there are many stories, localities, white women, black women, quilombolas, young women, older women, in their homes, backyards, plantations, associations, unions, fairs, networks who have much in common: the struggle and the strength.

We invite you to get to know the experiences supported by FIDA which are already examples and can be multiplied as good practices of women in the rural world (see next).



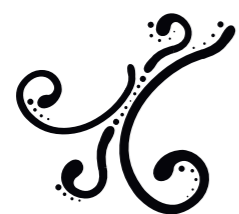
EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES

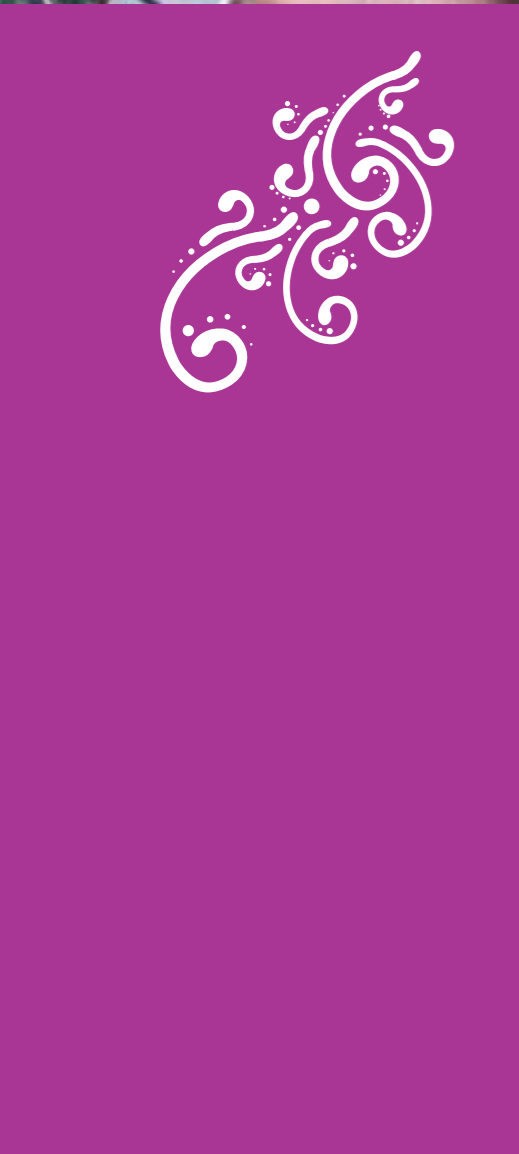
- Community kitchen “As Margaridas” in Remígio-PB
- Network Of Women In The Sertão Of São Francisco – BA
- Group Guerreiras do Pajeú de from Redondo/Tabira – PE
- Association of Women Farmers of Itainópolis (AMAI) – PI
- Experience of the farmer Francimara Oliveira in the production of horticulture in her productive backyard in the community of Oiticica/Tauá – CE





Systematization
of Good
Practices with
focus on women
and gender
equity
in rural and
urban areas



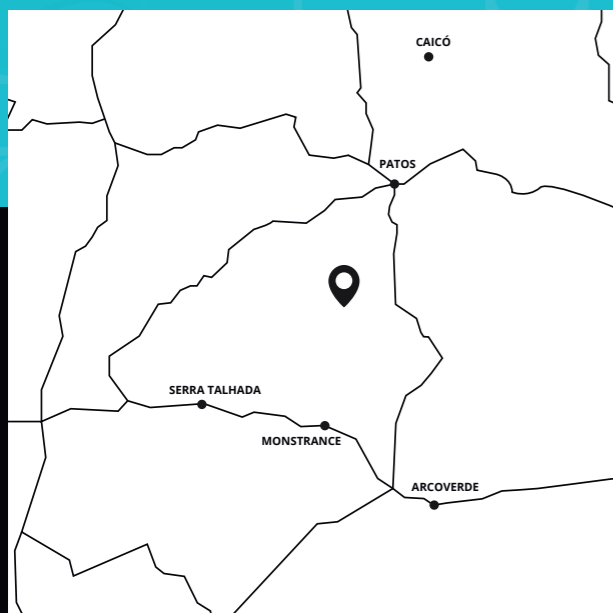




3.

Women of Pajeú II: Multiplying Solidarity in Pernambuco

LOCATED IN THE POÇO
REDONDO COMMUNITY
- MUNICIPALITY OF
TABIRA/PE, WHICH
IS BENEFITED FROM
DIRECT ACTIONS OF THE
DOM HÉLDER CÂMARA
PROJECT (PDHC)



COMMUNITY OF POÇO
REDONDO
MUNICIPALITY OF TABIRA/
PEPE)

KNOWING THE GUERREIRAS DO PAJEÚ WOMEN

In the community of Poço Redondo, in Tabira, 395 kilometers from Recife, there is a group called Guerreiras do Pajeú II, and that name is not by accident (Guerreiras means Warriors). It is composed of 20 brave women, from the sertão of Pernambuco.

They began to organize collectively with the support of the Association of Urban and Rural Women of Tabira (Amurt) 13 years ago, but the group really strengthened in 2007, with the arrival of the Dom Hélder Câmara Project (DHCP) and with the support and technical assistance of Casa da Mulher do Nordeste (CMN).

“

ONE WHO WALKS
ALONE MAY ARRIVE
FASTER, BUT THE
ONE WHO HAS A
COMPANION WILL
DEFINITELY GO
FURTHER.

CLARICE LISPECTOR

They began activities identifying the families that would benefit. But the memory of a very important moment for the women of Poço Redondo was the collective choice of the name. In that same meeting. They defined the objectives, the way they would organize themselves and, with the support of the CMN, they elaborated a regiment, used as reference until today. This process of choice and reflection of a name to represent them was definitive for them to see themselves as true warriors, because they worked hard for all achievements, so the name said a lot about their trajectory.

WISE AND WARRIOR WOMEN

The warriors are family farmers, who work in the farm together with their families producing corn, beans, broad beans, pumpkin, watermelon, maroon cucumber, cassava; but around the houses they plant their gardens, mainly for their own consumption. In these gardens you can find coriander, pepper, cherry tomatoes, chives, chilies, orange, soursop, papaya, mango, pineapple, guava, banana, acerola, seriguela and passion fruit. Some of them raise chickens, even geese, to sell eggs, milk and bottled butter, produced by them. These productive farms contribute to increasing family income and to ensuring healthy feeding at the table, and those women know and value it.

GUERREIRAS DO
PAJEÚ II GROUP.
PHOTO:
RAQUEL MOURA





ACTIVITIES IN POÇO REDONDO

Many of the various activities they accessed had reached the Poço Redondo community through DHCP and served to strengthen the community and the organization of women.

- 1● The Arca das Letras Rural Library Program, of the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA), uploaded a collection of approximately two hundred technical, didactic and literary books on a mobile shelf for the community.
- 2● A total of 30 water cisterns were built to capture water for human consumption, benefiting 32 families.
- 3● Plantation of forage palm and silage to store food for the animals during the dry season.
- 4● Installation of eco stoves.



THE ARRIVAL OF THE DOM HÉLDER CÂMARA PROJECT

The Dom Hélder Câmara Project (DHCP) articulates the productive and organizational processes, understanding the training on topics such as associativism, cooperativism, collective organization, participatory management, access to public policies, agroecology, food security, youth, gender, race and ethnicity as fundamental its value can be noticed after the end of the project, by the solidity with which the group of women continues to develop itself.

By 2018, after more than ten years, they continue to meet every month to talk about the needs of the group—a time they take to share their yearnings and challenges and find ways to help each other. From these meetings, they organize parties, raffles and bingos to raise funds, to schedule participation in meetings and public acts and to define courses and activities of the union or Amurt in which they will be present.

08 03

On March 8, for example, celebrating International Women's Day, at the municipality's headquarters, they participate in the actions and lectures on violence against women, health and production organization.





GROUP PROFILE

●
CHILDREN

85%

OF THE WOMEN IN THE GROUP, 1 AMONG 3, HAVE CHILDREN; 9% DO NOT HAVE CHILDREN; 6% HAVE MORE THAN 3 CHILDREN

●
SCHOOLING LEVEL

43%

OF THE WOMAN HAVE HIGH SCHOOL; 26% STUDIED UNTIL THE 4TH GRADE IN ELEMENTARY; 20% ARE FINISHING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL; 10% ARE UNDERGRADUATE / HAVE HIGHER EDUCATION

●
COLOR

48%

OF THE WOMEN IN THE GROUP REPORTED BEING BLACK; 42%, BROWN; AND 9%, WHITE

●
AGE

37,5%

OF THE WOMEN ARE AGED BETWEEN 19 AND 28 YEARS OLD; 28%, BETWEEN 29 AND 42 YEARS OLD; AND 31% BETWEEN 43 AND 60 YEARS OLD

●
UNIONIZATION

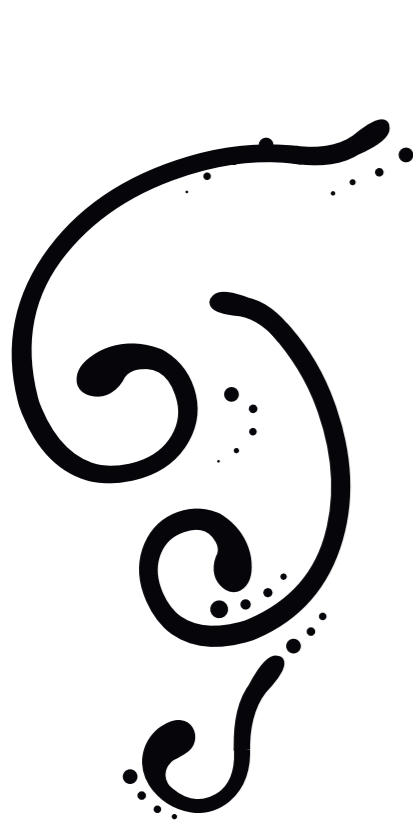
75%

ARE UNIONIZED WOMEN

●
MARITAL STATUS

81%

ARE MARRIED; 19% ARE SINGLE



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

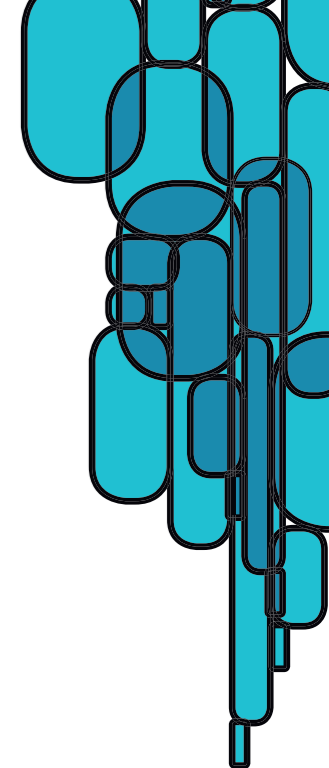
In order to strengthen the group, some partnerships were considered by them as strategic, such as the Dom Hélder Câmara Project, as a result of a loan agreement between the Federal Government and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (FIDA), so that other supports and actions could reach them. The other one — and as special as it was — was the presence of Casa da Mulher do Norte in the community, because it was a feminist organization that started to perform the group's counseling, remaining to this day. They mentioned other entities that contributed to the success of the organization, such as the Union of Workers and Rural Workers of Tabira, Diaconia, which also accompanies the community, and the Network of Women Producers of Pajeú.

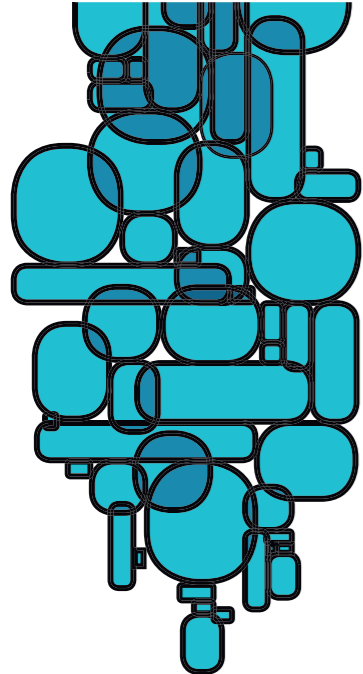
INITIATIVE THAT MULTIPLIES

Of the group, 21 women had access to the Fund for Social and Productive Investment – Fisp Mulher, a lost fund, in the amount of R\$ 1,050.00, for the acquisition of ten birds and the construction of a screened aviary to separate the area of chickens from the rest of the yard. This resource was acquired by family, through the association, who made the purchases and paid the labor for the constructions.

They evaluated this project positively, since it contributed a lot to the increase in the income of the family, as it made possible the increase in the number of animals in the backyards. And, complementing the work, the technical advisory carried out workshops to improve the food and sanitary management of the breeding, implying in the reduction production costs and in the quality of the household feeding.

In addition, the group decided to increase the number of women benefiting from the community with the resources and goods received through the Investment Fund, breeding their animals and distributing the same amount received to others who had not been benefited, or even to those who had losses in the process.





“THIS FUND HELPS A LOT. SOMETIMES WHEN YOU NEED IT, THE OTHERS ARE ALREADY PAYING, FOR THE OTHER TO RECEIVE IT.”



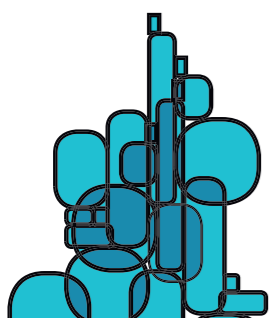
SOLIDARITY REVOLVING FUND

Poço Redondo's women's group developed the Solidarity Revolving Fund in the community, a community savings collectively managed to strengthen family farming. From the perspective of the feminist and solidarity economy, the women of the group organized this fund with the resources left over from Fisp Mulher, which at that time was R\$ 200.00.

With the Revolving Fund, they were able to invest in activities such as the purchase of sewing machines,

cosmetic products for resale, seam lines and needles for the production of handicrafts, as well as feed for pig, chicken, goats and sheeps, especially during the dry season period, and when any of them need it, the Fund covers some personal need.

Throughout these years, the Revolving Fund was accessed by dozens of women in the community and, today, its resources have tripled with the support of other projects, reaching R\$ 600.00. With pride, they point out that all the decisions of the group are taken in the collective.





THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE DOM HÉLDER PROJECT

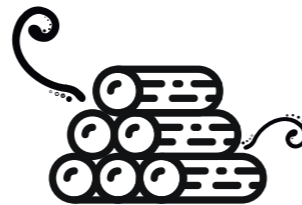
The Pajeú warriors evaluated the contribution of DHCP to their lives after a series of changes in the environmental, economic, sociopolitical and gender relation scopes, results of the resources used in several specific projects, and of the continuous technical assistance, fundamental for the actions.



INCREASE IN
REFORESTATION IN
THE REGION THROUGH
RECEIVED SEEDLINGS.



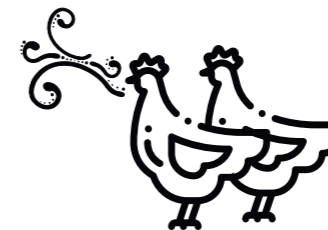
REDUCTION IN LUMBER
USE WITH ECOSTOVES



MORE ACCESS TO
WATER WITH THE
CONSTRUCTION OF
CISTERNS FOR HUMAN
CONSUMPTION AND
PRODUCTION AND THE
IMPROVEMENT OF THE
RIVERS WATER QUALITY,
WHICH STARTED TO BE
PRESERVED, CEASING
TO RECEIVE WASTE
AFTER THE FORMATION
PROCESSES.



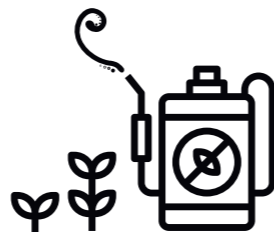
THE NUMBER OF
ANIMALS GREW WITH THE
PROJECT FOR CHICKEN
FARMING



... ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ...



THE USE OF ORGANIC
FERTILIZERS, IMPROVING
THE REUTILIZATION
OF INPUTS, SUCH AS
ANIMAL MANURE, IN THE
PLANTATIONS



NEW HANDLING
AGROECOLOGICAL
PRACTICES AND NATURAL
PESTICIDES, SUCH AS
THE USE OF NEEM
OIL TO REDUCE BOTH
ANIMAL DISEASES AND
INSECT ATTACK TO
PLANTATIONS



REDUCING SOIL
EROSION, WHICH WAS
MINIMIZED WITH THE
USE OF MULCH AND
NATURAL BARRIERS



SOIL FERTILITY,
STRENGTHENED WITH THE
END OF POISON USE
AND FIRES



Many of the changes happened due to the agroecological perspective, prioritizing food safety, conferred both by the PDHC and the technical consulting of the Casa da Mulher do Nordeste. The knowledge on agroecology allowed for significant changes in the way of producing, relating to the environment, managing natural resources, and in transforming social and gender relations.

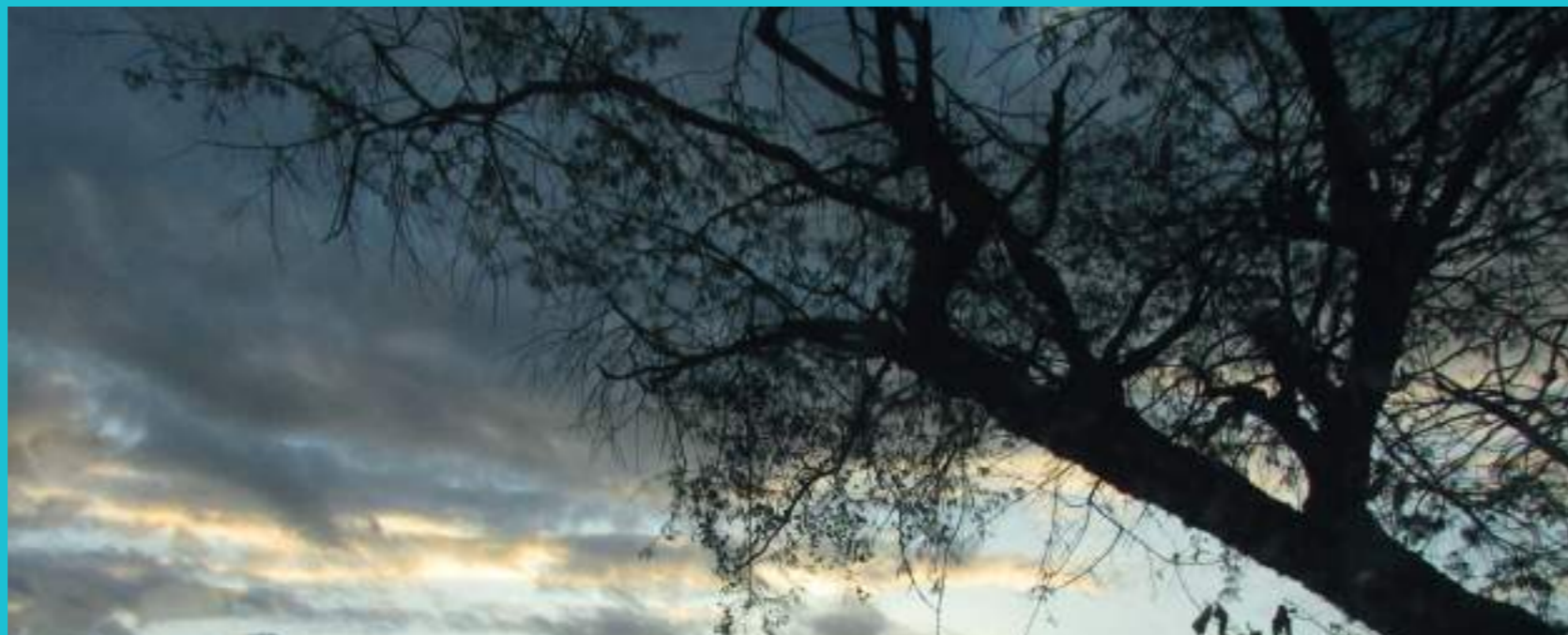


SOCIOPOLITICAL CHANGES

- The project has enabled the increase in the women's income, which was verified by the increase in purchase power, such as new household equipment, such as washing machines, mixers, televisions and mobile phones.
- With the technical consulting and the increase in food production in the backyards, families acquired more healthy eating habits, and the process of women participation in the community was strengthened with the participation in meeting inside and out of the community, course, festivals, and confraternizations.
- When observing gender relations, women considered that there was a reduction in violence against them thanks to the formation process and its organization, but they pointed out that achieving a fair division in domestic chores and care is still a challenge, despite having initiated some changes in the household.

SOCIOECONOMIC CHANGES

- With the increase in country chickens in the creation and the multiplication of investments with their reproduction and transference to other community women, besides the development of the Solidarity Revolving Fund.
- Another important aspect was the diversification of processed products, such as cheese, candies, butter and their local commercialization.
- And, with the increase of domestic production, there was a significant reduction in the family costs with food, observed specially with the production backyards, which affect directly the families' eating quality and diversity, with the consumption of milk, vegetables, eggs, and meat from the properties. Even with the increased of workload – since it is directly proportional to the production – the acquisition of equipment such as forage machines, water pumps, and electric sickle mowers has been reducing the heavy workload.



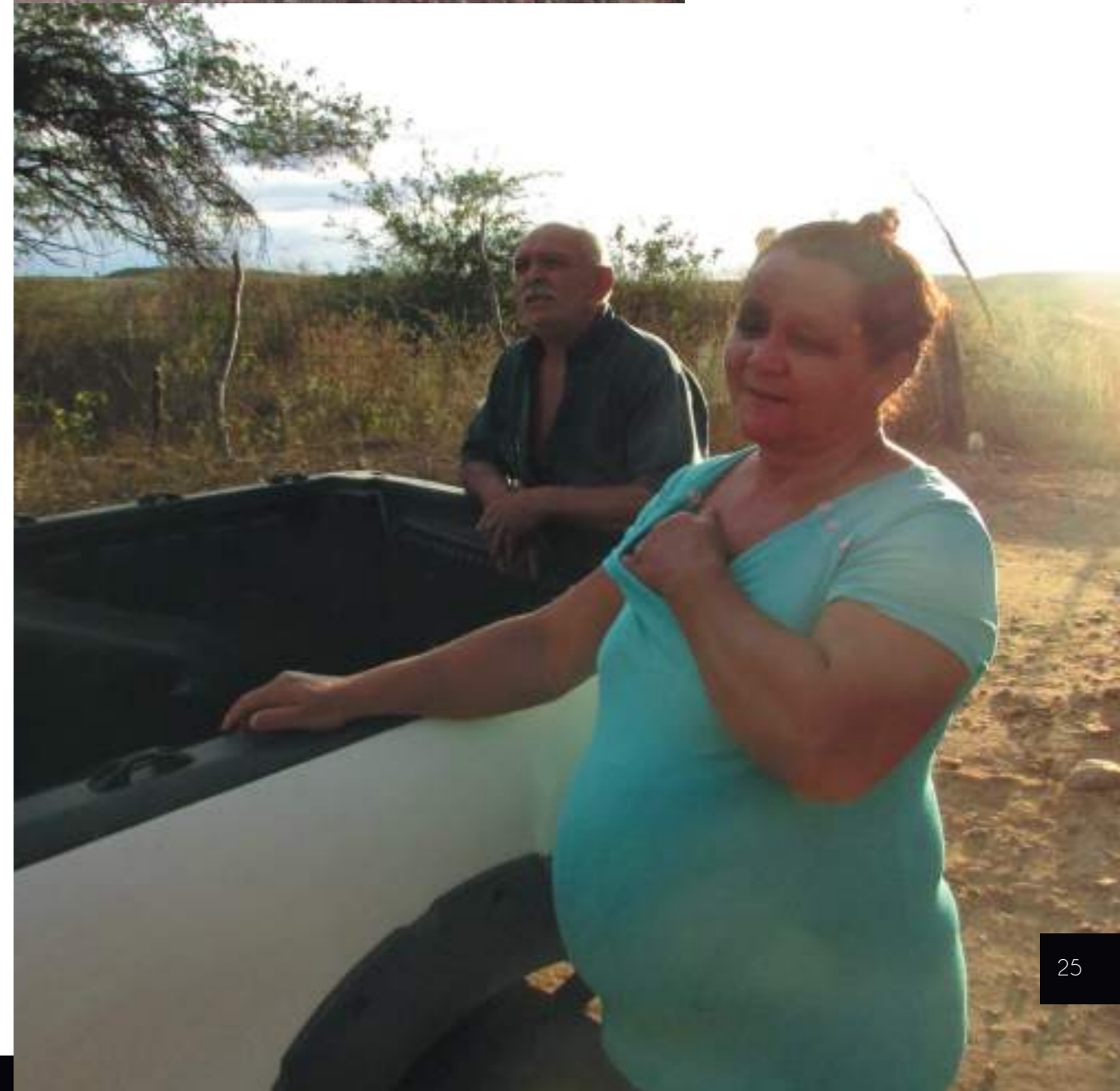
FOLLOWING PATHS OF TRANSFORMATION

In addition to the partnership with the Dom Hélder Câmara Project, other projects joined the community, based on actions such as: the construction of three biodigesters and the project of sheeps for twelve families by Diaconia; two projects for water reuse, by the Network of Women Producers of Pajeú; the project of the Productive Farms and the Women of Caatinga, with the Casa da Mulher do Nordeste (CMN); the environmental education actions with children, by CMN in partnership with ActionAid, besides the drilling of two deep wells for families that were still without water for consumption. In addition to the investments, the group has participated in a series of courses throughout these years, among them: courses of sewing and ribbon and of liquor production, organized by the City Hall; courses of sweets and snacks and of biscuit, promoted by Diaconia; of soap production, by CMN, and of breads, by the Network of Women Producers of Pajeú.

With all these changes, when looking at their stories, achievements and challenges, they consider their lives to be examples, since the group organized by them carries out actions of collective empowerment of women and of the community, which has generated individual and collective learning, from the systematic meetings and the feeling of union and support brought by these meetings. “There are lots of achievements. Just to be together every month, to discuss the affairs of the group... Sometimes you have a partner going through a hard time, we talk, explain, help with a word, because sometimes a word helps a lot more than money,”—says one of the participants. This is, for them, the strong point of the group. Without a doubt, solidarity is the word that defines these warriors of the Sertão of Pajeú.

“
TO WILL
ONESELF FREE IS
ALSO TO WILL
OTHERS FREE.”

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR



KNOWING THE LIFE OF A WARRIOR



Rita Fortunato proudly presents herself as a woman, farmer, mother, grandmother and representative of the Women's Group, as coordinator, but not only that. Rita is also the vice president of the Association and works in the Council of Rural Development (CDR) of the municipality of Tabira. She says she has always enjoyed participating in social organizations and movements. From an early age, she began attending the youth group and is now part of different activities, including the union, the Women's Forum and the Network of Women Producers of Pajeú. At home, Rita produces corn, beans, cassava, grows seasoning and vegetables in the farm and breeds small animals for family consumption, and keeps the house in order.

For Rita, the Dom Hélder Project played a fundamental role in her formation and in that of the other community partners, with the learning acquired in the exchanges, workshops, trainings and meetings. "Before, I was that housewife woman, from the kitchen to the fight, an indoor person, raising my children. And after the project I had to learn to reconcile the two activities: to be a housewife and to work for social movements. I think my life has changed a lot, from there on."—she says.

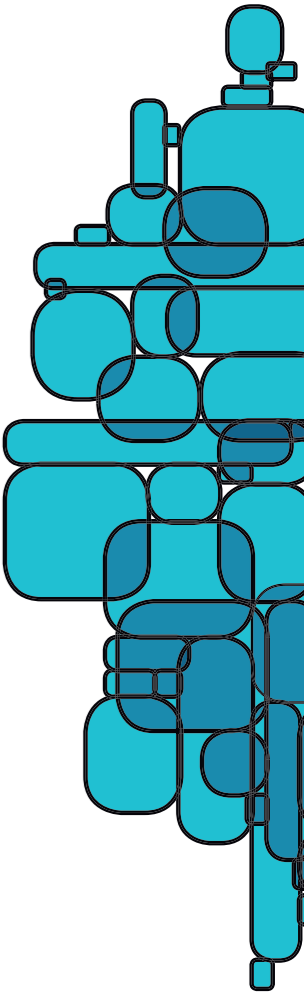
With all these initiatives, for the various projects they have accessed, Rita says that her income has increased, as well as that of all of the other women participating of the project. She believes that today everyone has more autonomy: "We became more our own women, more empowered of things, with more knowledge, and it helped us to be recognized as working women."





And the continuous technical advice taught a lot about how to preserve the environment, knowing the right place to dispose garbage, not cutting hardwoods, not burning, not using poison, using only natural defenses.

Rita says that at home, after several meetings—including one in which her husband participated—the division of housework has become fairer, since she also works in the farm. They started to work together in both environments.



“
I AM NOT FREE
WHILE ANY
WOMAN IS
UNFREE, EVEN
WHEN HER
SHACKLES ARE
VERY DIFFERENT
FROM MY OWN.”

AUDRE LORDE



CASA DA MULHER DO NORDESTE (CMN)

Casa da Mulher do Nordeste is a non-governmental feminist organization, founded in 1980, based in Recife, capital of Pernambuco, with office in Afogados da Ingazeira, municipality of Pajeú. Its mission is to strengthen the economic and political autonomy of women, based on agroecology, feminism and racial equality.

It was the first gender reference organization to be hired by DHCP (phase 1), for ten years, from 2003 to 2013, becoming a Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (Ater) implementing partner in 2004. It is the main articulator of the Network of Women Producers of Pajeú, in the region and, at the state and national levels, the CMN is articulated with the Women's Forum of Pernambuco, the Brazilian Women's Articulations (AMB), the Semi Arid Articulation, the National Association of Agroecology (ANA), the Black Women's Network, the Popular and Solidary Economy Forum, the Network of Women Producers from the Northeast, the Economy and Feminism Network, the Northeast Network Feminism and Agroecology, among others.



DOM HÉLDER CÂMARA PROJECT (DHCP)

Executed between 2001 and 2010, the Sustainable Development Project for Agrarian Reform Settlements in the Brazilian Semi-arid Northeast—Dom Helder Câmara Project (DHCP), which was renewed from 2014 to 2020 and is financed by FIDA in Brazil, is innovative. In partnership with the Brazilian federal government, it aimed to contribute to the reduction of rural poverty, enabling a decent life for 15 thousand families of communities and land reform settlements in the states of Ceará, Pernambuco, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte, Sergipe and Piauí, through sustainable rural development. Through the perspective of living with the semi-arid region and of the territorial development, the DHCP developed, through the active participation of civil society in the management and execution of the project, actions that sought to strengthen the organization of social development; production and marketing; of financial services; education and training; and environmental preservation.

One of the highlights of the project is participatory management, through territorial committees, with beneficiaries and their organizations, social mobilizers, rural unions and technical assistance providers—usually non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at all stages of project.

The Dom Hélder Câmara Project was pioneer on approaching gender, generation, race and ethnicity as transversal issues with specific actions, resources and teams. For gender issues, referential teams were engaged, both in the training of technical teams and

social mobilizers, and in the organization of women's groups in communities and settlements. At the same time, it recognized and strengthened feminist organizations—or with feminist perspectives—in technical assistance actions, such as Casa da Mulher do Nordeste, of the Centro Feminista 8 de Março, the Cunha Coletivo Feminista (CM8) and the Research and Development Center and Advisory Esplar. After an excellent evaluation of the Project by FIDA, a new agreement was signed with the Brazilian government to carry out its second phase, which is in the process of hiring teams and resumption of work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

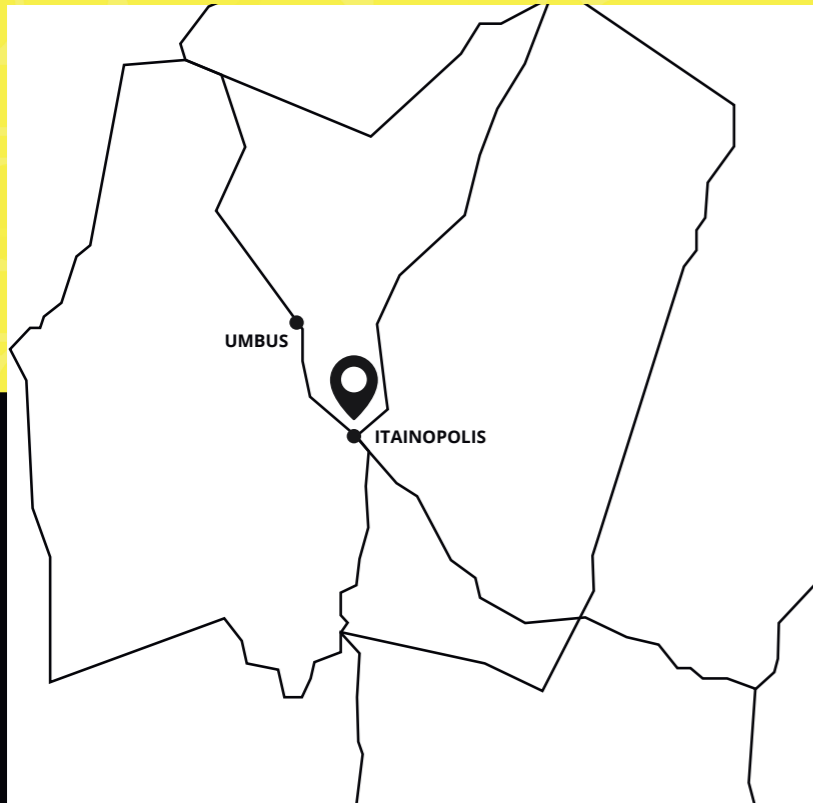
Graciete Gonçalves dos Santos, General Coordinator of the Casa da Mulher do Nordeste; Raquel Moura, Educator of Casa da Mulher do Nordeste; Wagda França, Secretary of Casa da Mulher do Nordeste; and Geraldo Firmino da Silva, Financial Manager of DHCP.





4. *Association of Women Farmers of Itainópolis:*

A RESISTANCE AND
PERSEVERANCE HISTORY
THE ASSOCIATION
IS BENEFITED FROM
THE ACTIONS VIVA O
SEMIÁRIDO (PVSA)



ITAINÓPOLIS IS LOCATED
AROUND 390KM FAR FROM
TERESINA, CAPITAL OF THE
STATE OF PIAUÍ.

SWIMMING BY THE RIVER OF THE LIFE OF THE WOMEN FARMERS ASSOCIATION OF ITAINÓPOLIS

T

he beautiful and long history of the Association of Women Farmers of Itainópolis (Amai) began in the 1980s, with the process of organizing the period of the establishment of Basic Ecclesial Communities (CEBs).

But it was in the 1990s that the rural women of Itainópolis decided to form a specific organization and to found the Association. It was not easy at first. They found it hard to get money to formalize the group and had to convince men that the organization was not a movement against them, but an extra force in the collective struggle. Today that reality has changed—men recognize the importance of this space.

But in that period, after the Constitution of 1988, for the issue of women's rights, which began to permeate the spaces, especially on rural workers, who became recognized there and had access to rural retirement and maternity wages, each achievement was a victory. The problem was to get civil documents, since many people did not have them, and they were obligatory to access public policies, but the existing records considered them women as “stay-at-home”

“
I AM NO LONGER
ACCEPTING THE
THINGS I CANNOT
CHANGE. I AM
CHANGING THE
THINGS I CANNOT
ACCEPT.”

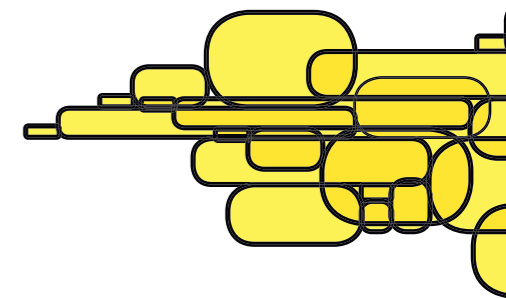
ANGELA DAVIS



or housewife. So the first battle was for documentation. Rural women came together and formed joint efforts. “We did not have a car, we did the service by bicycle,” “The movement was done by sharing,”—they remember. It was at this time that they also started actions related to collective health and women's health, promoting debates and training on alternative food, home-made medicine and nutrition, with multimixture.

With the founding of the Amai, women began to occupy power positions: two women from the association were elected—the first woman president of the Union of Rural Workers, Mrs. Francisca, and the first woman farmer as councilwoman in the municipality, Mrs. Teresa. For them, it strengthened the group and showed recognition of the work they were doing. After a lot of struggle, the trade union movement, on the occasion, they established quotas of at least 30% of women in the boards of trade unions, reaching gender parity today.

A cultural center (called Ponto de Cultura) for the municipality was an important achievement in 2010. There they took courses in handicrafts, crochet, clay, radio talk, communication, and the youth participation was fundamental. Now they had their own space!



AMAI AND THE PROJECT VIVA O SEMIÁRIDO

It was in 2015 that the Viva o Semiárido Project (PVSA) sought the association. The women learned of the project by the Municipal Council for Sustainable Rural Development (CMDRS). And women from different communities in the municipality were rewarded with technical advice. “We are 62 women in this association. Of these, 35 are part of the Project. It was there that the nuclei, which solved the distance between us,” one of them said.

To solve the distance between the communities of Itainópolis, they were grouped in four nuclei. The women of the Center were part of the Nucleus, with eight beneficiaries: from Barrocas, Barriguda, Boa Vista and Fava. Another eight women from Lagoa dos Cavalos, Junco, Ladeira and Tabua organized themselves in Nucleus 2. Trapiá and Baixas had eight women, and formed Nucleus 3. And the eleven members of Nucleus 4 were from the communities Morro do Milho, Campestre, Riachão and Sítio. Thus, they were organized so that the company Emplanta could work with all of them in the elaboration of the project. This was in 2016, and the beginning of the project took place the following year.

The Viva o Semiárido Project is the result of a partnership between the Government of Piauí and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (FIDA) to invest in the productive and social development of rural communities. In Itainópolis, the Productive Investment Plan included 35 associates, with R\$ 263,400.00, for structuring the production units in sheep and goat farming.

NUCLEUS 1

WOMEN FROM THE CENTER, WITH 8 BENEFITED WOMEN: FROM BARROCCAS, BARRIGUDA, BOA VISTA, AND FAVA

NUCLEUS 2

EIGHT WOMEN FROM LAGOA DOS CAVALOS, JUNCO, LADEIA, AND TABUA

NUCLEUS 3

EIGHT WOMEN FROM TRAPIÁ AND BAIXAS

NUCLEUS 4

ELEVEN MEMBERS FROM THE COMMUNITIES OF MORRO DO MILHO, CAMPESTRE, RIACHÃO, AND SÍTIO



“

GIVING UP ... I HAVE SERIOUSLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT, BUT I NEVER REALLY TOOK ME SERIOUSLY, THE POINT IS THAT THERE IS MORE GROUND IN MY EYES THAN FATIGUE IN MY LEGS, MORE HOPE IN MY FOOTSTEPS THAN SADNESS ON MY SHOULDERS, MORE ROAD IN MY HEART THAN FEAR IN MY HEAD”.

CORA CORALINA



IDEAS THAT DO NOT STOP EMERGING

The professional trainings offered by the continuous support of the Viva o semiárido Project were silage, granted by the Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Company (Emater), and the cakes and snacks ones, given by the State Department for Work and Entrepreneurship (Setre), through the Environment and Ecotourism Foundation (Funpapi).

DEEP FRIED SNACKS

MADE WITH GOAT MEAT

The course of cakes and snacks was remarkable for the group. Women knew that with this knowledge they could increase family income and strengthen the group. And during the lessons, which had a lot of chicken recipes, they suggested an adaptation and then started to produce coxinha, pastel, croquette, risole, “bolinha nordestina”—all with goat meat.

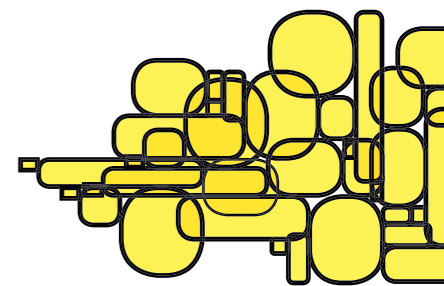
Then, one of the women had the opportunity to participate in the exchange and the course on ecogastronomy, organized by the Semear International Program, with the purpose of valuing the rescue of traditional foods. In partnership with the Slow Food Brasil movement, the trip went to the state of Sergipe in July 2018 and, there, they could receive tips on how to prepare meatless dishes, replacing it by vegetables, and how to reduce the wheat flour of the recipes, adding cassava to the dough. It was more knowledge for the group of women to apply in their snacks.

All the participants in the cakes and snacks training continued the production, preparing the families' food,

INCOME GENERATION

20000 SNACKS

IN 2018, THIS NUMBER OF SNACKS WAS SOLD, WHICH GENERATED A PROFIT OF R\$3400.00 IN SEVEN MONTHS.





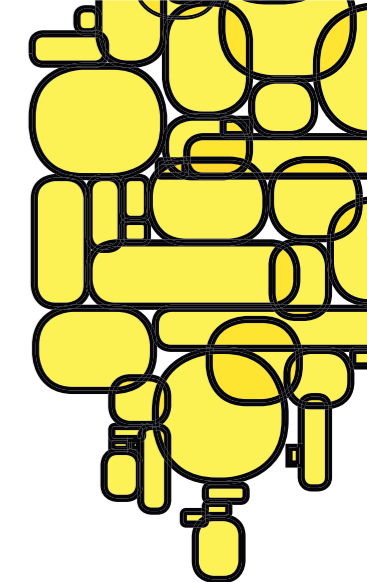
but ten of them sold the snacks for parties, meetings, ceremonies and events in the region. In 2018, they sold 20,000 salgados, which generated a return of R\$ 3,400.00 in seven months.

But the learning did not stop there. The women of the Amai participated in the 1st Goat and Sheep Farming Exhibition in Itainópolis, and had contact with several themes on the subject: an exchange in the municipality of Pintadas, Bahia, in which they were able to know the successful experiences of this productive chain; and the Participatory and Financial Project Management Course, important to know how to manage the association effectively. The opportunity to go to the Family Farming Fair of the Territory, in Picos, provided the sale of sweets made with fruits from productive farms; and the Youth Encounter in Jacobina, an activity carried out by the Viva o semiárido Project along with the Jacobina City Hall. All these participations generate knowledge and experience for the women of the group and strengthen their organizational and productive process.

The partnerships established with the women's

association, through the Viva o semiárido Project, over the years contributed to guaranteeing resistance and the struggle for better living conditions in the semi-arid region of Piauí. Organizations such as Ifad, the State Government of Piauí and the Department of Rural Development, as well as the Regional Unit of Project Management (URGP), the Project Management Unit (PMU), Emplanta—are all responsible for the implementation of the Viva o semiárido Project and for the improvement in the production of the family farms. Municipal bodies, such as the Union of Rural Workers of Itainópolis, for having given support to women, and the City Hall and the Secretariat of Agriculture; the Municipal Council for Sustainable Rural Development (CMDRS), through which they have gained access to the PVSA; Emater, which made it possible to access various public policies, such as the Safra Guarantee, for example, in addition to the Semear International Program, with exchanges.

This whole network of supporters made it possible for the group to safely navigate this road, tracing a path of conquest and autonomy, becoming an example of good practices for all demonstrations of perseverance, capacity for organization, participation, connection, willpower and political involvement in the fight for women's rights.

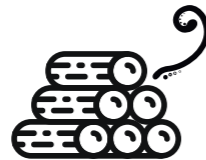


VIVA O SEMIÁRIDO PROJECT CHANGING THE REALITY

With the arrival of the Project, the history of the group and the life of the beneficiaries took a new direction. A series of changes occurred directly related to the actions of the technical advisory and to the structuring of the productive activity, such as the relationship of families with the environment. “The course qualified what we were already doing (in the case of the snacks), but it did not change the market,” they declared. With this reality imposed, they decided, then, that it was necessary to expand the channels and the forms of commercialization, quitting to sell in bulk, individually. And they envisage the possibility of selling to the Federal Government’s Food Acquisition Program and to the meals in the municipal schools, based on the experience seen in Sergipe, and the Pintadas Cooperative in Bahia.



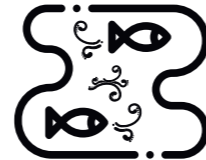
THEY TELL THAT THEY STOPPED DEFORESTING AND STARTED USING LESS LUMBER FOR THE FIRES AFTER THE FORMATION COURSE, WHICH HAD ALSO AFFECTED THE REDUCTION IN SOIL EROSION



THE ACCESS TO WATER INCREASED SINCE THE PLANTATION OF PALM TREES ALLOWED FOR THE INSTALLATION OF AN IRRIGATION SYSTEM PER NUCLEUS, AND THE WATER FROM FISH FARMING TANKS WAS EVENTUALLY USED FOR FERTILIZATION OF PLANTATIONS IN THE BENEFITED PROPERTIES



REGARDING THE RIVER' WATER QUALITY, THE WOMEN RECKONED A REDUCTION IN POLLUTION



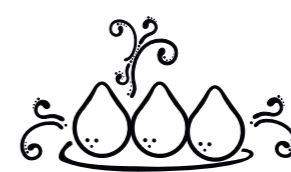
PLANT PLAGUES AND DISEASES WERE REDUCED WITH THE CONTROL IN THE USE OF AGROCHEMICALS.



THE IMPROVEMENT IN FAMILY INCOME, DUE TO THE DIVERSIFICATION AND INCREASE IN THE QUALITY OF PROCESSED PRODUCTS, AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THE COOKING AND PATISSERIE COURSE WAS EASILY NOTICED, JUST AS FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SAFETY, WITH SELF-CONSUMPTION OF THE PRODUCTION, BESIDES NOT HAVING TO SPEND MONEY ON BUYING SUCH FOODS



EVEN THOUGH THE WORK HOURS PER DAY HAVE INCREASED - SPECIALLY FOR THOSE PRODUCING AND COMMERCIALIZING THE SNACKS -, THIS IS COMPENSATED PROPORTIONALLY BY THE INCOME ACHIEVED. THE AUTONOMY AND SUSTAINABILITY WHEN PRODUCING THESE SNACKS ARE STILL A CHALLENGE, GIVEN THAT MANY OF THE RAW MATERIALS ARE BOUGHT IN THE CITY



PROJECT OUTCOME



SOIL FERTILITY INCREASED AFTER THE USE OF NATURAL ORGANIC FERTILIZERS. THE USE OF STRAW FABRIC IN THE PLANTATIONS AND OF NATURAL INPUT, SUCH AS ANIMAL MANURE, HAS ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO PRESERVING THE SOIL



WOMEN OBSERVED THAT MANY OF THE LAST YEARS' ADVANCEMENT RESULTED FROM PROGRESSIVE MUNICIPAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS THAT IMPLEMENTED PUBLIC POLICIES FOR FAMILY AGRICULTURE AND RURAL WOMEN



AND THEY HAVE OBSERVED THAT THEIR PARTICIPATION SPACES HAVE INCREASED, WITH MORE MEETINGS OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY AND THE MUNICIPALITY, BUT LEISURE TIME HAS BEEN REDUCED DUE TO THE INCREASE IN THE TIME DEDICATED TO THE PROJECT'S ACTIONS



THE WORKLOAD HAS ALSO DIMINISHED WITH THE ACQUISITION OF A FORAGE MACHINE, GIVEN THAT, IN THE WORDS OF ONE OF THE WOMEN: "WE DON'T NEED TO SUFFER CUTTING THE LAWN ANYMORE"



THE ADVANCEMENTS IN GENDER ISSUES WERE SMALLER. THERE ARE DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS ON THE DIVISION OF WORKLOAD, SINCE SOME OF THEM BELIEVE THEIR PARTNERS HAVE STARTED TO DO MORE HOME CHORES, DUE TO THE WORK THE WOMEN HAVE TAKEN ON OUT OF HOME. OTHER STILL NEED TO DO THE HOME CHORES EARLY, SO THAT THEIR CHILDREN WILL HAVE THE HOUSE TIDY AND BREAKFAST READY WHEN



THEY WAKE UP. HOWEVER, REGARDING DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE, WOMEN FEEL THAT THERE WAS A REDUCTION, DUE TO THE FACT THAT THEY WERE BETTER INFORMED AND AWARE OF THEIR RIGHTS

“NEVER FORGET THAT A POLITICAL, ECONOMICAL OR RELIGIOUS CRISIS WILL BE ENOUGH TO CAST DOUBT ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS. THESE RIGHTS WILL NEVER BE VESTED. YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY VIGILANT YOUR WHOLE LIFE.”

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

UNDERSTAND THE VIVA O SEMIÁRIDO PROJECT

The Viva o Semiárido Project (PVSA) is an action of the Government of the State of Piauí, in partnership with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which since 2013 has initiated its cooperation to reduce poverty, to increase production and to improve the standard of living of rural populations with a higher level of social and economic deprivation in the semi-arid region of Piauí. The actions take place through the strengthening of its main productive activities, increasing the generation of income and strengthening the social organization of these families.

The Project operates in 89 municipalities in five territories of Piauí: in the Vale do Sambito, in 15 municipalities; in the Vale do Rio Guaribas, in 39; in the Vale do Rio Canindé, in 17; in Serra da Capivara, with 18 municipalities; and in the Chapada Vale do Rio Itaim, with 16. The work is carried out by the Department of Rural Development (SDR) to support the production chains of apiculture, goat and sheep farming, cashew, pisciculture, poultry, productive farms, swine breeding, cassava farming, irrigation and handicrafts. And the accompaniment of the actions is guaranteed with the technical assistance to all the beneficiaries, prioritizing women, young people and quilombola communities.

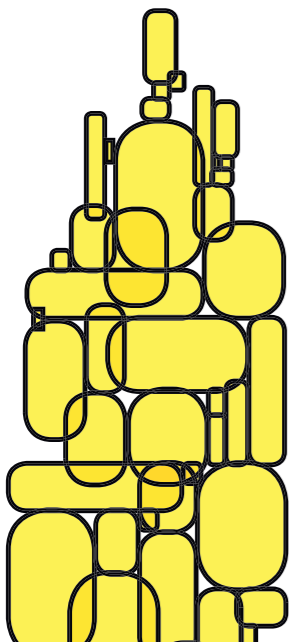
In the Human and Social Development Component, the Project carries out actions to strengthen contextualized education, through the Secretariat of Education (Seduc) and the professional qualification for young people, by the Department of Work and Entrepreneurship (Setre). However, even though they do not have a gender counseling, these actions have already involved about 1,700 women in their projects and have targeted specific groups of women.



EMPLANTA

The Company of Planning and Technical Advice of Agriculture and Livestock Farming (Emplanta) is responsible for systematic technical assistance (STA), contracted by the PVSA and serves Amai. Created in May 1997, it is a private company, headquartered in the city of Oeiras, in the state of Piauí.

With the mission of generating and adapting technologies, providing technical assistance and rural extension to family farmers, developing productive infrastructure projects, water infrastructure and providing goods and services for the sustainable development of family agriculture and agribusiness, the company operates in 49.10% of the municipalities of Piauí (109 municipalities). It has regional offices, as well as its headquarters in the City of Oeiras, in the municipalities of Picos, Paulistana and Teresina, but began its actions in the municipalities of the state's.





HELENA AND THE NUCLEUS FROM MORRO DO MILHO

In the property of Mrs. Helena, president of Amai, which is located in the Morro do Milho community, she shows how her yard is productive and shows the beautiful forage palm (elephant) plantation and the structure of the sheep and goat corral, originated by the actions of the PVSA.

The area of palms is collective, but each of the eleven women who make up the nucleus has been given the resources to build individual corrals. They are still awaiting the purchase of the animals, but most of them already take advantage of the structure and feeding of the palms to other creations.

Helena considers that her house is in the farm, and that her farm is the yard. She spends most of her time in this space. And the diversity of vegetables, fruits, medicinal and edible plants is impressive, ranging from passion fruit, papaya, mango, seriguela, banana, blackberry, guava, cane-cane, lemon balm, boldo, elephant grass, even grapes.

And in this same yard there is the sheep and goat corral, and the pigs and chickens breeding, all for the family self-consumption, but nothing prevents it from making exchanges with the neighborhood and selling the surplus. Besides, it is possible to see the palm plantation that Mrs. Helena uses to feed the animals, and the pisciculture tank, where Helena's husband, Emi, develops tambaqui farming. Moreover, the family develops apiculture with fifteen boxes of bees located in a forest near the house.

All this diversity of production by Helena and Emi improved the life of the family, which could be seen with the reconstruction that the couple is doing in the house and proudly show, for example, the masonry and porcelain wardrobe they are putting in their bedroom.

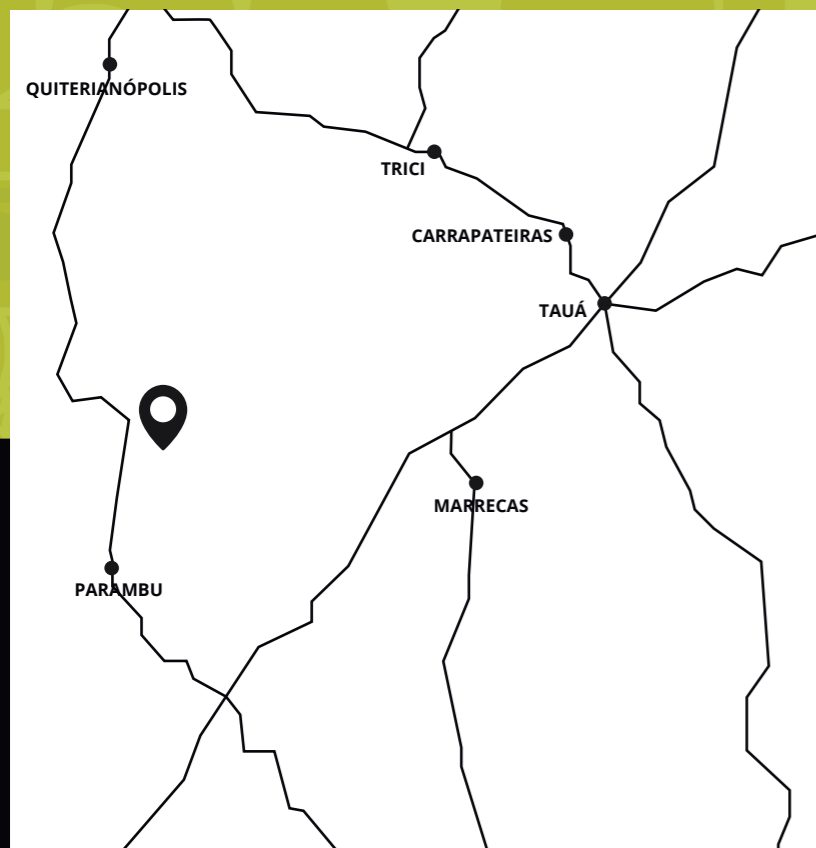
Helena's experience highlights women's economic contribution to families and community development.



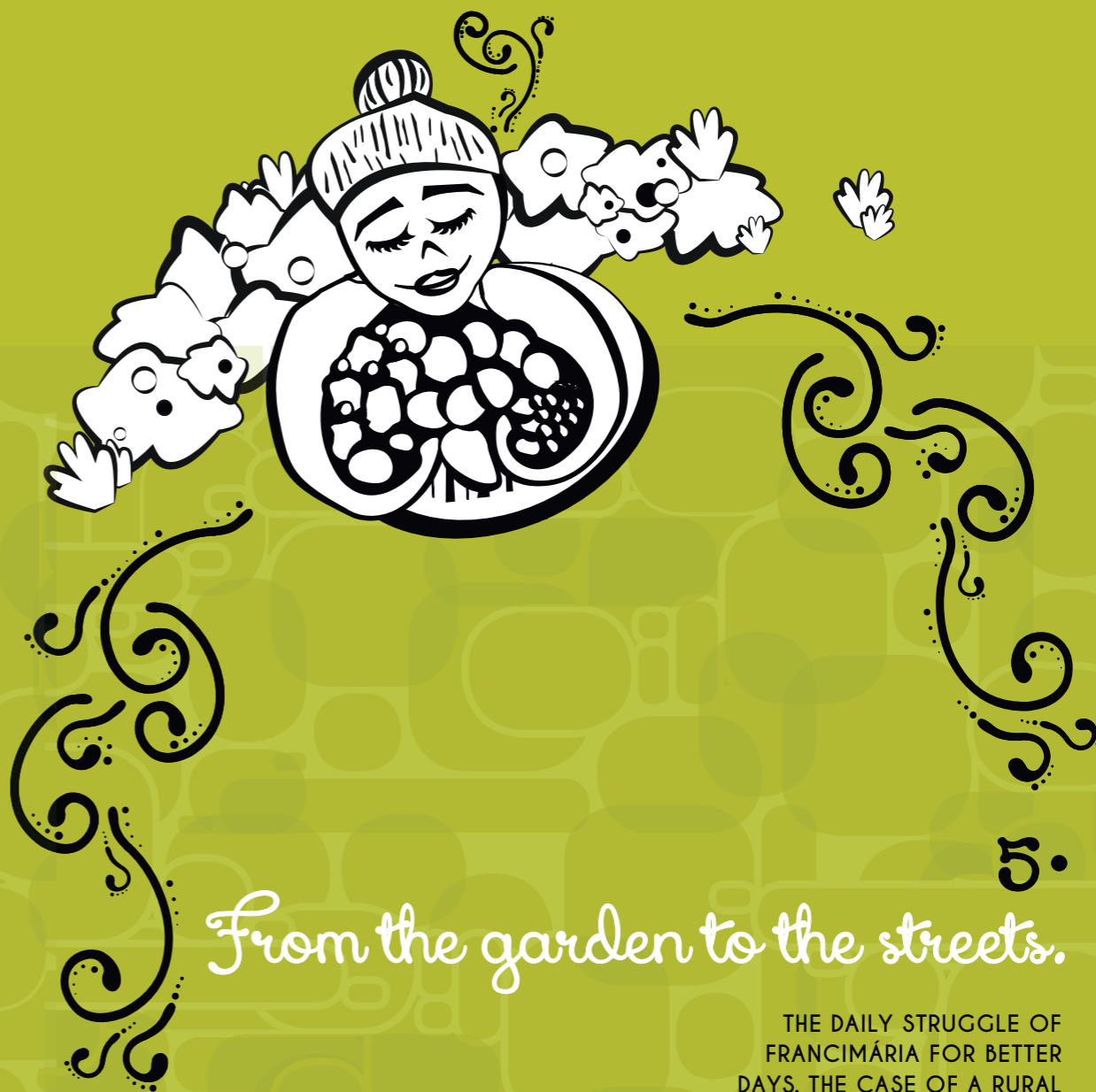
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OITICICA, IN TAUÁ, 331
KM FROM FORTALEZA,
CAPITAL OF THE STATE
OF CEARÁ



5. *From the garden to the streets.*

THE DAILY STRUGGLE OF
FRANCIMÁRIA FOR BETTER
DAYS. THE CASE OF A RURAL
PRODUCER BENEFITED FROM
THE ACTIONS AND SUPPORT
OF PAULO FREIRE PROJECT
(PPF)

“IT IS THROUGH
GAINFUL
EMPLOYMENT THAT
THE WOMAN HAS
TRAVERSED MOST
OF THE DISTANCE
THAT SEPARATED HER
FROM THE MALE;
AND NOTHING ELSE
CAN GUARANTEE HER
LIBERTY IN PRACTICE.”

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

WOMAN FORCE

Francimária Gomes de Oliveira is 45 years old. Better known as Cimara, she was born and raised in the community of Oiticica, in Tauá, 331 km from Fortaleza, capital of Ceará. She had worked with her father since she was twelve, but when she was married at the age of fifteen she went to work with her husband. At that time, they lived in a house of mud, maintained until today, next to the masonry house where they live, in which they raised their children. “Being able to have a masonry house was hard going”—she says.

Cimara lives with her two children, 28-year-old young man and a 25-year-old young woman, her husband and two grandchildren. If they were to depend only on the work of the farm, they would go through difficulties: “we had a few hard times; some days we did not even have a bread to eat, we had to buy on credit, we could not go every day on the market, we had no meats, eggs or other protein at our table every day”—she says. So she decided to sell cake, coxinha, enroladinho and cocada made by her, and left every afternoon to sell door to door. So Cimara saw that she had a way with business.

STEP BY STEP OF A WARRIOR WOMAN

She prepared five flowerbeds and developed a vegetable garden to sell the production in the neighboring town, called Vila de Vera Cruz. “Life began to improve after the flowerbeds, because the farm only wasn’t enough”—says Cimara. With the new activity and increased production, she accessed the Food Acquisition Program (FAP) and, in 2004, became the first farmer in the community to sell her products to the institutional market, which changed her life. With the new performance, the whole family became involved in planting.







HOME AND LIFE: THE FRUITS OF CIMARA'S STRUGGLE

Currently, Cimara provides the Project with lettuce, parsley, papaya, cakes, and candies and is paid at every three months. She tells us that she used to receive up to R\$4,500.00, but that, nowadays, with the reduction of the financial support by the federal government, the value was reduced, and she started earning R\$2,500.00 per delivery.

It was supplying for PAA that she saved the money to invest on her property: she dug a well and installed irrigation on the garden. This attitude was essential to confer the production more stability and to reduce the workload. She also built the masonry house she so longed for in 2005.

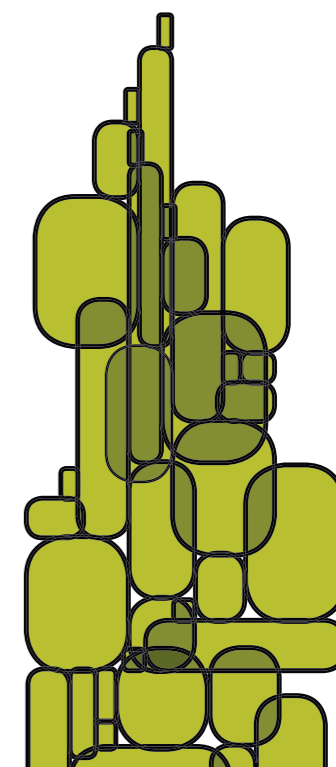


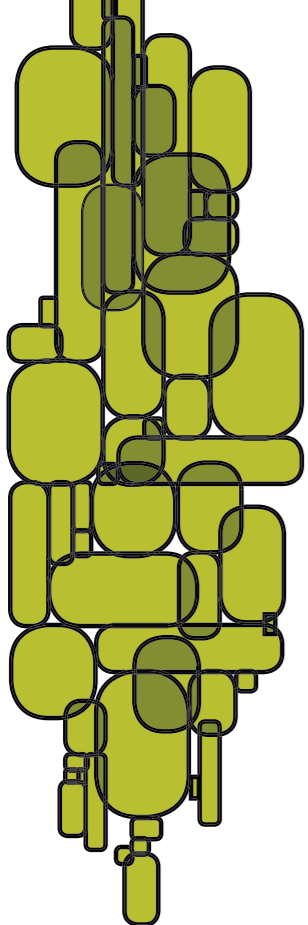
And Cimara, not satisfied, decided to innovate, and made cards to promote her products. With that, her sales increased, selling later in Tauá. “I cannot read, but I’m kind of active for that other thing. I started to have a clients, I worked, worked, until the well dried up, but I did not lower my head”—she says.

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It was with this work focused on the PAA that she became a reference for the women of the community. “Here, the only one who had a flowerbed, a vegetable garden, was me. I activated it, and today all those women have a little farm. And mine, every day, grew more. My job helped, because now women, all of them, have their yard, everything will be sold, most of them are in the PAA. About twenty people are involved in the community, all of them are women. There were husbands who would say: ‘You followed her thoughts and you’re not going to get any money.’ Three months no money was deposited. Four months later, and there you go: R\$ 4,500.00 on the account, all of it. The husband was really happy.”





Day by day, she and her husband work in the garden, which is around the house. Every other day, she goes to Tauá to sell her production. Besides the sale to the PAA, she delivers her products alone alone in the greengrocers, in the markets, and sells coriander, pepper and papaya door to door. At night, she works making candy and cakes, packing, putting the labels. The routine is very intense, but she believes that it is with the result of her work that she can guarantee a better life for her children.

The livelihood of the Cimara's family depends on the farm, where she also breeds fifty chickens: "I sell the alive chicken for 30 reais, but if it is plucked, it costs 35 reais. I installed my well using money from chicken sales too."

She is the one who does all the selling of the production, at home, in the markets in the nearby towns and in the city's headquarters, both in the larger markets and door to door. "I put am the breadwinner here [...]. In the selling, I do everything people come here to buy. Sales by WhatsApp for fruit peddler, markets, everything is by WhatsApp, all my customers. People know that I can not read and send a voice message. I say, 'send a voice message.' Currently, a trip to Tauá makes around R\$ 200.00 per day.

GET TO KNOW THE PAULO FREIRE PROJECT

Present in 31 municipalities of Ceará, the Paulo Freire Project (PFP) works to reduce poverty and the development of six hundred rural communities with the lowest Human Development Indexes (HDI) in the state. Its actions seek to promote, since 2015, social and human capital, including sustainable production of families, seeking to increase income from agricultural and non-agricultural activities

With a priority focus on young people, women and traditional peoples and communities, its activities cover six territories of Ceará: Cariri, Sertão dos Inhamuns, Sertão dos Crateús, Sertão de Sobral, Serra da Ibiapaba and West Coast/ Vales do Curu e Aracatiaçu.

The work has been developed from two components: Capacity Development and Productive Development and Environmental Sustainability. To develop capacities, training activities are carried out to access public policies, technical advice, training, mobilization and social control, training of young people for economic activities and access to land, and qualification of technical advisors. Regarding productive development and environmental sustainability, it is sought to finance productive investments as a strategy to support family farming, based on the principles of coexistence with the semi-arid and agroecology.



DIOCESAN CARITAS OF CRATEÚS

Responsible for Continuous Technical Assistance (CTA), Diocesan Caritas of Crateús is the organization hired by the Paulo Freire Project to follow up Francimara and her family, ensuring successful results in the experiences developed in the property.

It is an organization that, together with Caritas Brasileira, carries out training and community organization actions, defense and gaining of basic rights, social control of public policies, as well as articulation and social mobilization. It prioritizes the incentive to agroecological production, fair and solidary marketing, contextualized education of living with the semi arid and environmental education (solid waste). Its experience of developing and working on projects to coexist with the semi-arid region—many of them linked to the Semi-Arid Articulation (ASA), dealing with problems in the region—guarantees the effective search for a fairer and more harmonious life in rural communities.





THE PAULO FREIRE PROJECT AND THE GUARANTEE OF TECHNICAL ADVICE CHANGED FRANCIMARA'S LIFE

In 2016, the Paulo Freire Project, executed by the Department of Agrarian Development of the Government of Ceará, from the partnership with

IFAD, reaches the community of Oiticica and the life of Cimara. Through the Association of Residents of Milagres, it implements the following Investment Plan: it benefits 95 people, 39 of whom are women, among which is Cimara. The actions planned for the investment in the production of vegetables are:



“

“He [technician] arrives, he helps us to make compost, we didn't use to do it. Before, I used to put the manure there, than just watered it to get the “liquid” out, and threw it on the garden. But now, things have changed. With the compost, the corianders are healthy, they are not damaged at all and in an instant they grow. After Paulo Freire, I changed the flowerbeds, the way to do it. I used to make it near the ground, now it is high, the flowerbeds, for the water to stay in those ditches to keep it wet. The product I use in the garden is the detergent, that we make with the pepper, the smoke, which they taught and I know that it kills all the pests.

AFTER THE CONSULTANCY ENABLED BY THE PPF, CIMARA WAS ABLE TO IDENTIFY THAT THERE WERE SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES, SUCH AS THE INCREASE IN THE FOREST AREA, AFTER THEY CEASED DEFORESTATION AND STARTED PLANTING FRUIT TREES IN ORDER TO HAVE MORE SHADE AND PRODUCTION



AND THE PLANTATION OF CHILI WAS AN INNOVATION THAT IS CURRENTLY USED AS A NATURAL DEFENSE FOR THE GARDEN



IT WAS AFTER THE PROJECT'S ARRIVAL THAT SHE WAS ABLE TO REDUCE GARDEN PESTS AND DISEASES, HAVING LEARNT NEW TECHNIQUES, SUCH AS THE SUSPENDED GARDEN AND THE CULTIVATION OF PLANTS THAT HELP TO CONTROL INSECTS, BESIDES USING NATURAL DEFENSES, ALWAYS AIMING AT A BETTER BIOLOGICAL BALANCE FOR THE PRODUCTION



REGARDING THE ACCESS TO WATER IN THE PRODUCTION UNIT, EVEN THOUGH CIMARA HAD ALREADY THREE WATER CISTERNS AND A SHALLOW WELL, WHEN THE GARDEN INCREASED HER INCOME, AFTER THE PPF, SHE COULD INVEST AROUND R\$ 17,000 ON EXCAVATING A WELL AND INSTALLING AN IRRIGATION SYSTEM. CURRENTLY, ANOTHER WELL IS BEING EXCAVATED, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED IN THE INVESTMENT PROJECT FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY



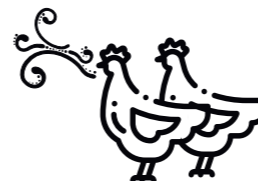
PROJECT RESULTS



THE CHANGES IN THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF CIMARA'S FAMILY WERE MANY. WITH THE INCREASE IN SALES, THEY COULD ACQUIRE NEW DOMESTIC EQUIPMENT. THEY BOUGHT A FORAGE MACHINE, A TANK TO WASH CLOTHES, AND INSTALLED INTERNET SIGNAL



THE ECONOMIC RESULTS CAN BE REGISTERED BY THE INCREASED FOODS PRODUCED IN THE BACKYARD, SUCH AS COCONUTS, PAPAYA, VEGETABLES, LEMON, KALE, LETTUCE, AMONG OTHERS, WHICH USED TO BE BOUGHT IN THE MARKET. GIVEN THAT, IT IS OBSERVED THAT THE INCREASE IN WORKING HOURS IS COMPENSATED BY THE INCREASE IN FAMILY INCOME



THE COMMUNITY'S WOMEN HAVE, AFTER THE GUIDELINES, INCREASED THE NUMBER AND QUALITY OF ANIMAL FARMING IN THEIR BACKYARDS, SUCH AS CHICKEN AND PIGS, BY IMPROVING FOOD AND SANITARY HANDLING, AMONG THEM THE VACCINATION OF CHICKS, THE USE OF LEMON IN THE CHICKENS' WATER TO PREVENT INFECTIOUS CORYZA, AND PERIODICALLY CLEANING OF DRINKING FOUNTAINS WITH THE REUSE OF PET BOTTLES



SOIL FERTILITY WAS IMPROVED, WITH THE REDUCTION IN EROSION AND CONTAMINATIONS, BY THE USE OF MULCH AND BY DIVERSIFYING THE PLANTATION IN THE BACKYARD, ALWAYS USING ORGANIC COMPOST, IN WHICH EVERYTHING IS REUTILIZED, AND ONE CAN SAVE MONEY WHEN BUYING SEEDS. EVEN THOUGH THE PRODUCTION OF WASTE WAS REDUCED, THE PROPER DESTINATION IS STILL A CHALLENGE, ESPECIALLY FOR PLASTIC

“
EVERY MORNING SHE
LEAVES HER DREAMS
IN BED, WAKES UP
AND PUTS ON HER
CLOTHES TO LIVE.

CLARICE LISPECTOR



With the income of the yards, today, she is able to keep her son in school, which works in alternation system, paying the necessary fees and gasoline for the fortnightly trip to the municipality of Indepedência, at about 100 km from Tauá.

“I have so many certificates of courses, I have the cake course one, which we already took, the Paulo Freire certificate of homemade bread course, of sequilho. We have already had a meeting of the association to discuss women’s rights, with women only. We were wondering how to build a bakery”—Cimara recalls.

The farmer says she is happy that her work is being recognized. And this is expressed through the visits of exchanges in her productive unit, with people coming from other communities and from other states. For her, a remarkable moment was when she received, by the hands of the mayor of Tauá, of the “Mulheres Empreendedoras” award, given by the Commercial Association of the municipality. With the investment of the Paulo Freire Project and the continuous technical assistance, the possibilities of commercialization were widened: Cimara had only

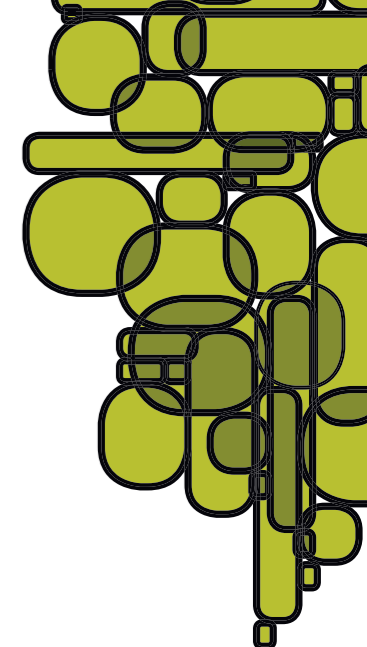
ten flowerbeds, today she has increased to forty, with the possibility of expanding to fifty.

The increase of expenses—recurring in the country’s political and economic context, with consumption of energy, internet, gasoline and transportation—is remarkable, but the farmer has managed to optimize her working time with the use of the forage machine and with the installation of the irrigation system. And it tends to improve with the acquisition of new equipment, foreseen in the Investment Plan of the project. The result of the work is extremely positive, both for Cimara and her family, and for the other beneficiaries of the community, not only for having become an example, but also for the possibility of paying daily to local farmers, two or even three times a week, for their work in the garden.

But Cimara does not stop dreaming of more changes. She would like to have a house for the chicken, to increase the production of the garden and, perhaps, to sell her products for school meals through the National School Feeding Program (PNAE).

AUTONOMY

About violence against women, Cimara notices a decrease in those cases, because, according to her, “today women are no longer dependent on their husbands”—an affirmation that expresses the understanding that economic autonomy is a path for confrontation of violence against women.



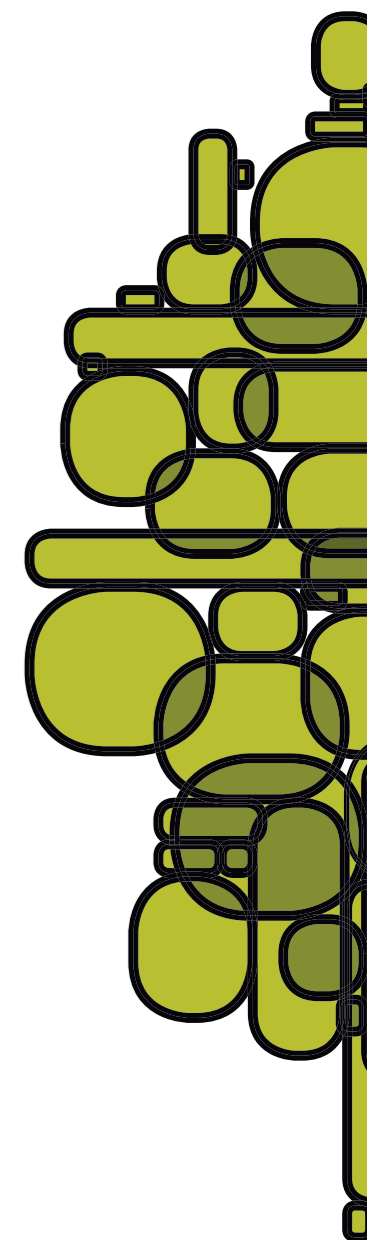
TESTIMONY INCOME GENERATION

The monitoring of Paulo Freire helped me to have income, because everything that is received here is from the flowerbeds. There is no money coming in from anywhere else. There are people who do not believe it, I was once told: "Woman, no one lives off flowerbeds, no!". And I answered: "Woman, I do live off my garden at my house. No money comes in from another place. I do not have a pension, I do not have any salary. Everything is from the garden." Before the project we used to have a minimum wage, and now, after the project, our income is sometimes more than two thousand a month.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Francisca Maria Rodrigues Sena (specialist in gender, race and ethnicity of the support in identifying the experience, in the search for structure for the visit, field visit monitoring and photo); **Rocicleide Silva** (technical coordinator of PPF, general information about the project, support to the visit); **Iris Tavares** (Coordinator of the PPF, support for completion of work); **Maria Odalea de Sousa Severo** (Capacity Development Supervisor of the PPF); **Francisca Lúcia Ferreira de Sousa** (monitoring and evaluation Manager, monitoring of the visit); **Luiz Vicente de Oliveira - Luisté** (capacity development specialist of the Paulo Freire project); **Daniela da Silva Cavalcante** (Coordinator of PPF in the Caritas Diocesan of Crateús, identification and indication of experience and mobilization of the beneficiary); and **Aparecido** (field technician of Caritas Diocesan of Crateús, mobilized the beneficiary and monitored the visit).



6. Quilombolas Women of Talhado: The (re)existence of the “Louceira” Tradition in Paraíba

QUILOMBOLA COMMUNITY
BENEFITED THE ACTIONS OF
THE PROJECT OF SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT IN CARIRI,
SERIDÓ, AND CURIMATAÚ
(PROCASE)



MUNICIPALITY OF
SANTA LUZIA, PARAÍBA,
320 KM FROM JOÃO
PESSOA, CAPITAL OF
THE STATE



The quilombola women, or “loiceiras”, as they are popularly called, of the community of Talhado congregate the tradition of a productive activity that was born in an arid landscape of the sertão from Paraíba. As an alternative to guarantee the survival of families and along with tradition, the constant reinvention and innovation of handmade clay pieces mark the history of this place.

Located in the municipality of Santa Luzia, in the mesorregion of Borborema and microregion of the western Seridó of the state of Paraíba, Northeast Brazil, the experience of these women producers of earthenware goes back to the bravery of the quilombos remnants and the connection between the rural and urban world.

“

Ó, MANA, DEIXA EU IR
Ó, MANA, EU VOU SÓ
Ó, MANA, DEIXA EU IR
PARA O SERTÃO DO
CAICÓ
EU VOU CANTANDO
COM UMA ALIANÇA NO
DEDO
EU AQUI SÓ TENHO MEDO
DO MESTRE ZÉ MARIANO
MARIAZINHA BOTOU
FLORES NA JANELA
PENSANDO EM VESTIDO
BRANCO
VÉU E FLORES NA CAPELA”

(MUSIC BY VILLA-LOBOS AND
LYRICS BY TECA CALAZANS.
THIS SONG IS THE THEME OF
THE DOCUMENTARY ARUANDA. IT
PORTRAYS THE SITUATION OF MANY
BLACK PEOPLE THAT FORMED THE
QUILOMBOS, OUT OF A CONTEXT
OF SLAVERY LOOKING FOR
FREEDOM).

Due to its historical importance, a documentary was produced in 1960 by Linduarte Noronha, entitled Aruanda, from Paraíba, how the transportation of pots, pans, couscous pans and other household utensils is exposed and marketed on the sidewalk of the Santa Luzia fair.

They walked 26 km on foot and the dishes were transported on the backs of animals. To speak of this history, it is necessary to report the space where it had its first expressions, called Serra do Talhado Rural. “To continue in the rural carving, it is necessary to be determined,” says Lucia, a resident of the Community of the Talhado Rural, about facing the difficulties of life in the semi-arid climate of rural areas.



PHOTOS OF
TALHADO RURAL

STEP BY STEP



The clay is beaten with a stick, which is an effort taken by the women



The clay is sieved and dampened so that it can be mashed and kept under plastics for conservation



When the mixture is ready, the clay is modelled from the center to its edges



The piece is smoothed with a knife or another similar tool



After that, it is smoothed with a wooden tool, then with a glass cullet and a little leather piece



With the help of a little knife, the edges are levelled, and the piece is put to dry



After drying, a stone is used to smoothen it



The piece is then taken to the masonry oven and covered with glass cullets broken earthenware utensils



After this process, the pieces are removed from the oven to cool down and to be commercialized



RITA PRETA,
FIRST LEADER OF THE
EARTHENWARE PRODUCERS
FROM QUILOMBO DO
TALHADO.

The great-grandparents of Rita Maria da Conceição Ferreira—better known as Rita Preta –, José Carneiro Bento, Zé Bento, ex-freed slave, and Cecília Maria da Purificação, were the first inhabitants of the Talhado Rural community in the middle of the 19th century.

Rita Maria da Conceição Ferreira, great-granddaughter of Zé Bento and Cecília Maria da Purificação, was born on April 25, 1931 (image 1). Rita Preta was a earthenware producer (louceira) and became their first leader in the quilombo Talhado.

It was with the production of dishware that women sustained their families in the drought of the 1990s, because food production was scarce.

In that period, the brave Rita Preta, admired by her companions, decided to move to the outskirts of the city of Santa Luzia, Paraíba, to form the Comunidade Urbana do Talhado. With her, they migrated around thirty women and their families, and it was there that they organized the sale of their dishware. They built their houses around the shed of the earthenware producers and formed a community that maintains typical countryside ties and, moreover, with a degree of kinship between them.

But it was only in 2011 that the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA) recognized this group as a Remnant Community of Urban Quilombo of Serra do Talhado, which led to the creation of the Community Association of Black Louceiras from Quilombo Talhado. Maria do Céu, one of Rita Preta's granddaughters, was the representative and, like her grandmother, served as a source of inspiration and courage for the producers, but she was tragically killed by her former partner, becoming a victim of femicide, in October 2013.

“

My grandmother used to pick up her son's truck and leave to sell the production.

If she was not able to sell, she traded it for food. She used to help people and bring a lot of them to eat in her house. It was always like this, she shared with everyone what she earned. She never let anyone starve.

GISELE, RITA PRETA'S
GRANDDAUGHTER,
WITH PRIDE



The news of Maria do Céu's death has left the bitter experience of an irreparable loss, but also the memory of a black woman who fought for her community. Gileide, her sister, now president of the association, says she is inspired by the history of Maria do Céu when deciding as a representative of this group.

PROCASE: A SOCIOECONOMIC SUPPORT PARTNERSHIP

It is in the history of struggle of these brave women who have fought, created, resisted, reinventing themselves, that the “louceira” tradition was born and maintained. And it is from here that the Sustainable Development Project of Cariri, Seridó and Curimataú (Procasa) developed a partnership to support this sometimes harsh but beautiful history of women organization.

The group became an important network to support the reproductive work carried out by women, who share domestic activities and the raising of their sons and daughters. Usually, the children go with their mothers in the production space, and they share the care of the daughters and children of the group.

It is with the income from the sale of these dishes that women provide for their homes, which makes the production and sale of crockery essential for maintaining these families.

Today fourteen models of pieces are produced, such as: pan, pot, couscous pan, bowl, dish, water pot, coffee pot, jar, platter, frying pan, fruit bowl, stove, glasses and decorative pieces, in different sizes.

SAINT JOSEPH
CHAPEL



Women “louceiras” from Talhado took courses and training in production and commercialization, promoted by the partners Social Action of the Diocese of Patos and the National Rural Apprenticeship Service (Senar), through Procace. These organizations provide technical assistance to women so that the latter can develop professional and social skills of farmers.

The Cariri, Seridó and Curimataú Sustainable Development Project (Procace) is the result of a bilateral agreement signed between FIDA and the state of Paraíba, covering 56 municipalities in the semi-arid region of Paraíba. It aims to contribute to

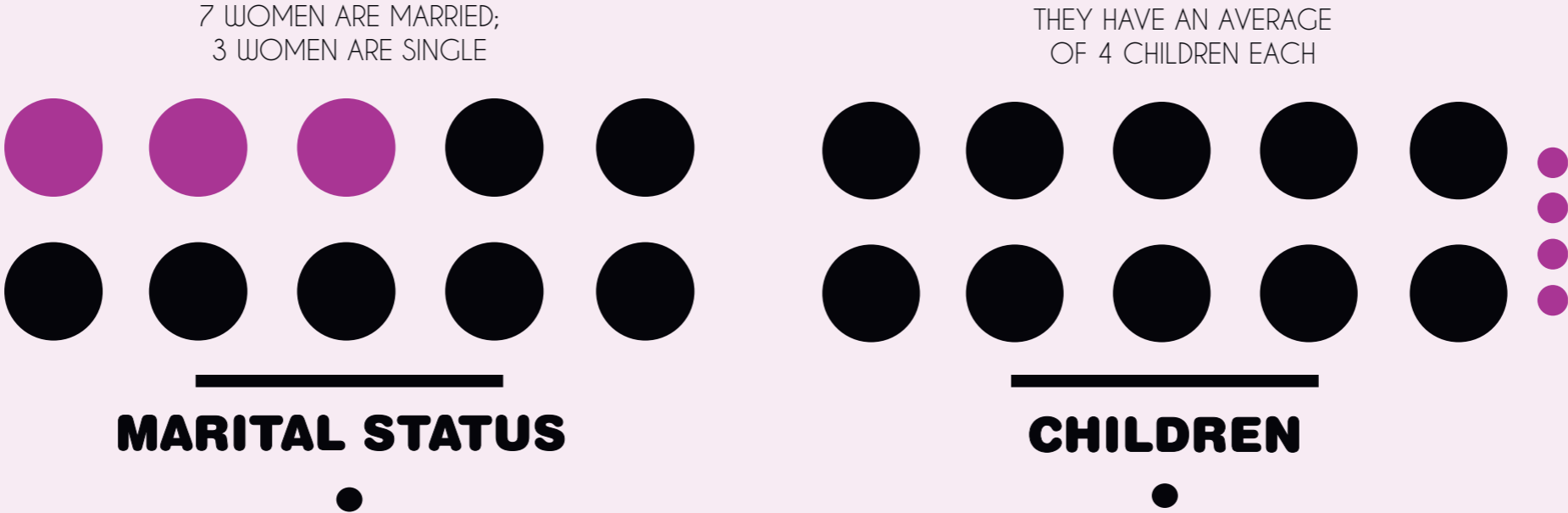
sustainable rural development, reducing the current levels of rural poverty and strengthening the actions of prevention and mitigation of desertification in this area. Its actions range from promoting events and training courses, to strengthening productive activities through financial support for new or already consolidated rural enterprises, which may be agricultural or non-agricultural.

Procace’s investments include activities such as sheep and goat farming, fruit growing, agroindustries, handicrafts, associative and cooperative enterprises. In addition, activities related to the new ruralities

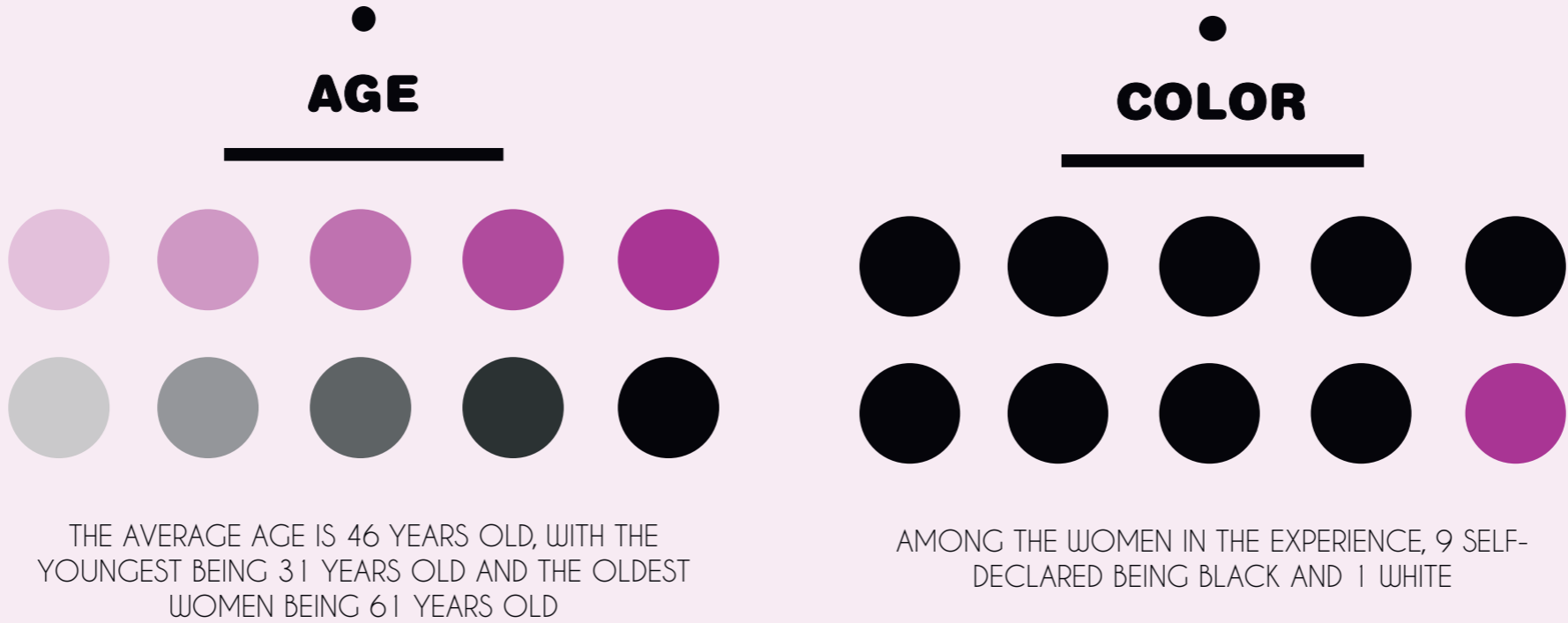
are encouraged, based on local dynamics, aimed at strengthening the rural economy. All actions prioritize the involvement of groups of women, young people and remaining communities of quilombos.

The support for the Community Association of Black Louceiras from Quilombo Talhado started in 2015, with the funding of R\$ 152,000, benefiting ten families directly and thirty more people, indirectly. This amount will be used to rebuild the shed and the production furnace, drill a complete well with pumping, purchase machinery and office equipment, production and selling and marketing training. Up to this systematization, R\$ 34,200.00 had already been invested.





**EXPERIENCE COMPOSED OF
10 WOMEN**





TRAININGS PROMOTED BY THE PROCASE

- Afro Hair and Identity Professionalization Course, held in 2017, destined for the youth, aiming to provide learning about afro hair care and strengthening of black cultural identity.
- Associativism, Gender and Empowerment, and Business Management and Entrepreneurship, both carried out in 2018.
- Exchange in the Handicraft Show of Campina Grande, in 2017.
- Three exchanges (in 2015, 2016 and 2017) among quilombola communities, the first being held in the Comunidade Urbana do Talhado.
- Participation of two young women from the community at the Semi-arid region youth summit held in 2016 in Campina Grande.
- Presence of women in the plenary assembly of the State Democratic Budget in 2017.
- Launch of Procace's actions for 2018 and participation in the fair of the municipality of Monteiro; Rural Women's Fair, held in Picuí, in 2017.
- Women's Exchange made in Remígio, in 2017; Campina Grande, in 2016; and Sumé, in 2015; in addition to the Black Women's State Summit, held in João Pessoa in 2015.



THE PARTICIPATION IN EXCHANGES AND TRAININGS WAS STRATEGICAL TO RAISE WOMEN'S SELF-ESTEEM, JUST AS THE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE, WITH THE OPPORTUNITY OF EXPERIENCING OTHER REALITIES, FOR STRENGTHENING THE GROUP'S IDENTITY.



THE RESTORATION OF THE SHED WHERE THEY WORKED HAS ALLOWED FOR A MORE PROPER AND SAFE STRUCTURE FOR THE PRODUCTION, BESIDES THE BUILDING OF THE AREA DESTINED TO ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS SALES MANAGEMENT, FOR EXAMPLE.



AS A RESULT THAT IMPROVED THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE, IT WAS MAINLY OBSERVED THE GROWTH IN THE ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROGRAMS, SUCH AS BOLSA FAMÍLIA, AS WELL AS THE IMPROVEMENT IN WORKING CONDITIONS WITH THE NEW EQUIPMENT.



IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT



THE ACCESS TO WATER, WITH THE EXCAVATION OF COMPLETE ARTESIAN WELL FOR PUMPING. BEFORE THAT, THE GROUP OF WOMEN WOULD PROVIDE THE WATER FOR THE PRODUCTION FROM THE HOUSE OF A NEIGHBOR CLOSE TO THE SHED. AND THE CONSUMPTION COSTS WERE SPLIT AMONG THEM. TODAY, AS EXPRESSED BY ONE OF THE WOMEN IN THE GROUP, "AFTER THE WELL, EVERYTHING IS A PIECE OF CAKE" (FÁTIMA, 50 YEARS OLD), REFERRING TO THE EASY ACCESS TO THE WATER NECESSARY FOR THE PRODUCTION.



THE INCREASE IN FAMILY INCOME WAS ONE OF THE IMPROVEMENTS MENTIONED BY THE GROUP, SINCE THE PRODUCTION GREW IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, SINCE PROCASE APPROACHED THE GROUP OF WOMEN. THEY USED TO PRODUCE AROUND 700 PIECES PER MONTH, NOWADAYS, THE PRODUCTION IS AROUND A THOUSAND PIECES PER MONTH. THE ECONOMICAL IMPROVEMENT IS OBSERVED DUE TO THE GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES AND IN MOBILITY, SINCE THEY ALL CURRENTLY HAVE THEIR OWN MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION.



FUTURE PERSPECTIVES OF THE PARTNERSHIP WITH PROCASE

The benefits of the investments that are being made to help the female producers, by Procace, can already be seen. And the expectation is that the next actions will achieve even better results, such as:

- a 30% increase in the production of handmade pieces, with the acquisition of the equipment planned;
- estimation of training in selling and marketing, which will help women to draw strategies and increase the number of retail outlets in the search for greater autonomy;
- acquisition of the vacuum pump, which will help to produce of the ceramic mass and its to recycle it;
- in addition, the acquisition of solid waste crusher will do the work of grinding the clay, with a 50% decrease in time, generating more safety and health at work, allowing an improvement in the quality of life of these women.

Given this scenario, the perspective is that there is a greater generation in the income of women, with the increase in production and the expectation of expanding retail outlets.

It was the history of this group of women that resisted, faced and created alternatives that allowed the strengthening of the “louceira” tradition. And the producers women from Talhado have developed important partnerships for the result of the experience that they have today. Among the impact partnerships in the history of these women, the support from Procace, through the financing of FIDA, presents itself as a prominent example.

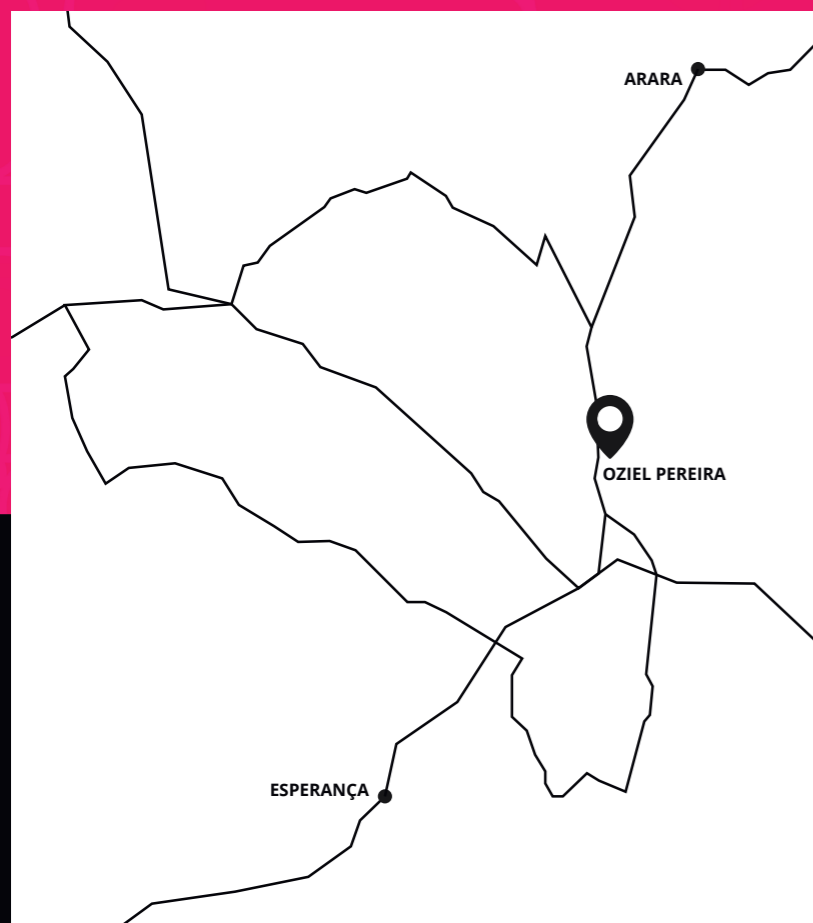




ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Maria d'Oliveira (Procace's Gender Advisor); Maria Aparecida Henriques (Human Development Manager at Procace); Samantha Pimentel (Procace's Communication Advisor); Sheila Nascimento (Procace's social mobilizer at the URGP of the Médio Sertão); Orlando (coordinator in the URGP of the Médio Sertão of Procace); André Luiz Azevedo da Silva (Senar technician); all the "louceiras" of Talhado, especially Gileide, and the community of Talhado Rural.





OZIEL PEREIRA
SETTLEMENT, 4 KM FROM
THE MUNICIPALITY OF
REMIGIO, LOCATED AT
AT 170 KM FROM JOÃO
PESSOAL, CAPITAL OF
THE STATE OF PARAÍBA



7. *As Margaridas de Remigio: from the access to land to the creation of alternatives for local development in Paraíba*

GROUP SUPPORTED BY THE
PROJECT OF SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT IN CARIRI,
SERIDÓ, AND CURIMATAÚ
(PROCASE)



The story of the “Margaridas (Daisies) do Assentamento Oziel Pereira”, at four kilometers from the headquarters of the municipality of Remígio, tells us about the struggle and the social and political organization that promoted the autonomy of a group of women, in which persistence and innovation were part of the discovery of their own gardens, according to the poem of Carlos Drummond de Andrade, mentioned in the introduction of this article.

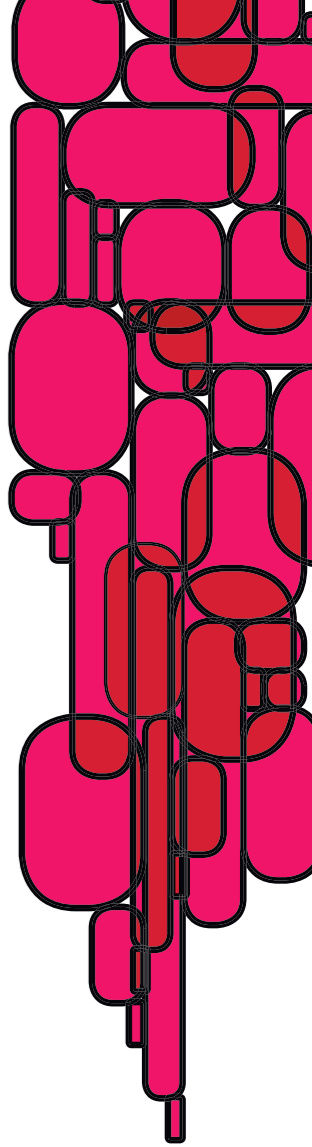
The land occupied by the Daisies and their families is located in the state of Paraíba, in the Brazilian Northeast. It was the result of agrarian reform in 1999, after the National March of the Landless Workers Movement (MST) passed through the municipality, when it was regularized and became a settlement. But it was only in 2003 that women were able to access benefits for the construction of their homes. They spent four years living in shacks, “under canvas”.

Three years later, the women of the settlement began to gather, searching for productive alternatives besides the agriculture already practiced in their properties. They started with the handicrafts and then made handbags, dish cloths, paintings and crochets. Encouraged, they tried to access the Federal Government’s credit for settled women, called Women’s Support, but they did not succeed.

That is where the idea to build a collective kitchen came from, to produce food for sale in the neighborhood, at events and also as a possibility of delivery in the National School Feeding Program (PNAE), which uses the products purchased in the municipal school meals, to be consumed by children.

“
EMBELLISH YOURSELF
WITH DAISIES AND
TENDERNESS
AND BRUSH THE SOUL
WITH LIGHT FRICTIONS
OF HOPE.
OF BRUSHED SOUL
AND RECKLESS HEART,
LEAVE THE BACKYARD
OF YOUR OWN
AND DISCOVER YOUR
OWN GARDEN.”

CARLOS DRUMMOND
DE ANDRADE



With that expectation, they created the group “As Margaridas” (The Daisies), in honor of Margarida Maria Alves, former president of the Rural Workers’ Union of Alagoa Grande, in Paraíba, icon of the struggle for basic rights of rural workers, murdered in August 1983, after several death threats.

The group found several difficulties in the beginning. According to the women, the lack of adequate space for the production was one of the biggest challenges, since they had to make viable the production in their houses viable, using their domestic ovens. Adding to this, there was also great difficulty in selling to school meals, because of prejudice against the organic production of the Landless Movement settlers.

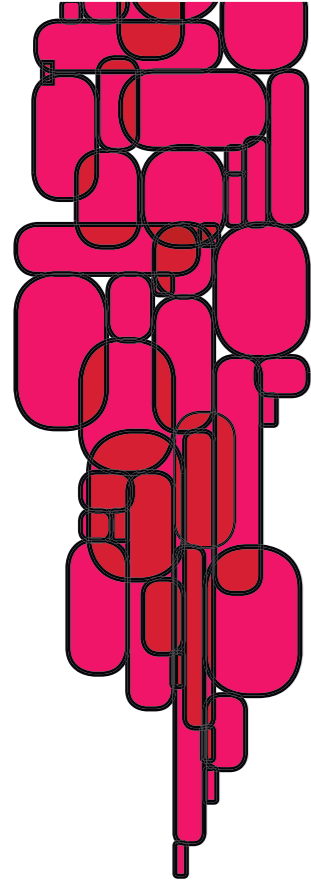
Women reported that, because they did not use pesticides, food became more perishable than that of conventional production, and some schools began to resist the acquisition of the women’s production, and even threatened the cancelation of the contract with the group by the Remígio City Hall. Therefore, they created the strategy of developing a network of relations with rural schools, which were more receptive to for organic products.

However, an important support was the access to resources of the Community Revolving Fund of R\$ 1,500.00, and a loan of R\$ 600.00 made by some people in the community. These resources were accessed in 2013 and scored as key for them to be able to purchase the first production equipment in the communal kitchen.

Since 2010, the group has participated in the March



UP, JESSICA, ONE OF THE “DAISIES”, REPRESENTING THE GROUP AND TALKING ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF AGROECOLOGY. DOWN, AGROECOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL YOUTH FAIR OF THE BORBOREMA POLE.



PRODUCTIVE PROCESS
FOR SUPPLYING FOR
THE NATIONAL SCHOOL
FEEDING PROGRAM
(PNAE)



for the Life of Women and for Agroecology, with the banner of agroecology and gender equality, promoted by the Borborema Trade Union Pole, which has strengthened the feeling of being a group.

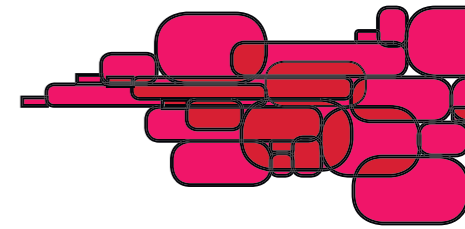
The Daisies have a story of a lot of struggle and persistence before the adversities faced, from the right to access to land to the creation of a productive space that allowed them to build their own stories. This

trajectory keeps the struggle and courage of Margarida Alves alive. And it was in this context that Procace, with the co-financing of FIDA, began to support this experience.

The Daisies usually work in the communal kitchen around 15 hours a week, alternating moments in which everyone works and others in which only some are active. And the ingredients necessary for the production of snacks, such as cassava, eggs, and fruits, are usually derived from their own properties.

The group developed partnerships with Polo Sindical de Borborema, the Advisory Services and Projects for Alternative Agriculture (AS-PTA) and the Cooperative for the Provision of Technical Services of Agrarian Reform in Paraíba (Cooptera), the latter responsible for technical assistance for the “Daisies.”.

The group also developed a partnership with the “Cozinha Verde” Project, which focuses on safe and nutritious food, economic emancipation of women in situations of socioeconomic vulnerability, and family-based agroecology. It provides training in the production of foods for people with gluten intolerance, lactose and for the public adept at the vegan diet, with noanimal-based ingredients, whose food base is composed of gluten-free flours, seeds, fruit peels and vegetables.



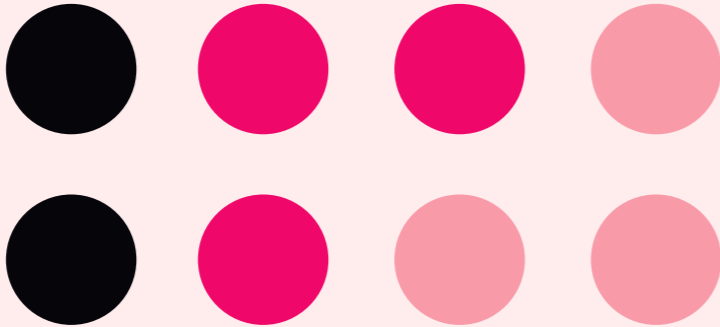
“

IT IS BETTER TO
DIE FIGHTING THAN
STARVING. I DO NOT
RUN AWAY FROM THE
FIGHT.”

(MARGARIDA ALVES,
THE INSPIRATION FOR THE
NAME OF THE GROUP
OF WOMEN IN THE
COMMUNITY KITCHEN).

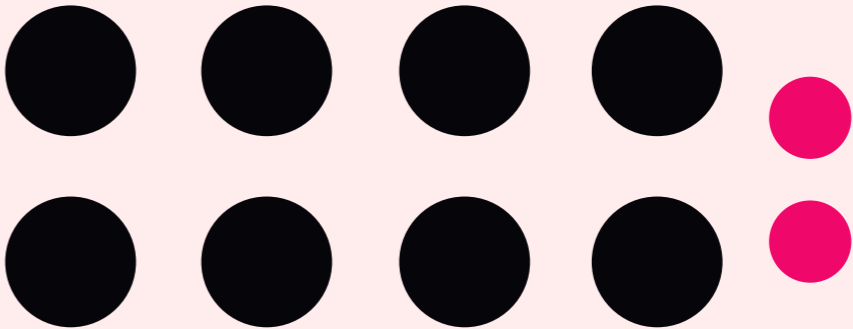


3 WOMEN ARE MARRIED
3 WOMEN ARE SINGLE
2 WOMEN ARE WIDOWS



MARITAL STATUS

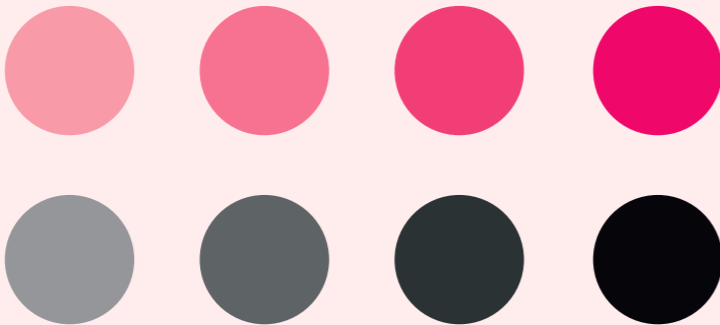
THE WOMAN HAVE, IN AVERAGE,
TWO CHILDREN EACH



CHILDREN

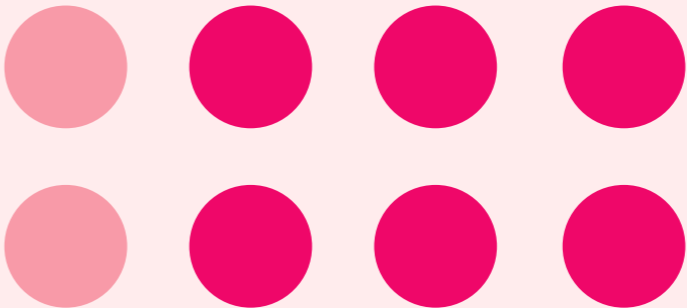
EXPERIENCE COMPOSED OF 8 WOMEN

AGE



THE WOMEN'S AVERAGE AGE IS 41 YEARS
OLD, WITH THE YOUNGEST BEING 20 YEARS
OLD AND THE OLDEST ONE BEING 61 YEARS
OLD

COLOR



MOST OF THEM (6) CONSIDER
THEMSELVES TO BE BROWN, AND 2,
WHITE

THE DAISIES AND PROCASE: A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

1200
UNITS

The Daisies now sell to the National School Feeding Program (PNAE), in addition to making meals for delivery and sometimes selling the roasted, gluten-free and lactose-free pasties at the Agroecological Fair. For the National School Feeding Program (PNAE), an average of nine hundred units are delivered, of which 300 units per week and 1,200 every two weeks, of coconut and butter tapioca, plus one hundred kilos of milk cakes, manioc, corn, passion fruit, sweet potatoes, carrots and guava, every week.



For on-demand sales, both for individuals and for legal persons, meals are usually produced and, in addition, gluten-free pastry, baked tapioca, mugunza, pamonha, canjica, baked beiju and confectionery cake.



In the last five months, since the group made the last contract with the National School Feeding Program (PNAE), in the amount of R\$ 19,500.00, plus R\$ 6 thousand in orders in general, it is possible to consider monthly gross revenue higher than R\$ 5 thousand, for the whole group. According to the women reported, there is an average of expenses, per month, of R\$ 2 thousand, leaving R\$ 3,100.00. Of this amount, R\$ 1,500.00 remains as capital reserve, and the remainder is divided between them. Therefore, each one of them receives around R\$ 250.00 per month.

**INCOME
GENERATION
R\$ 170000**

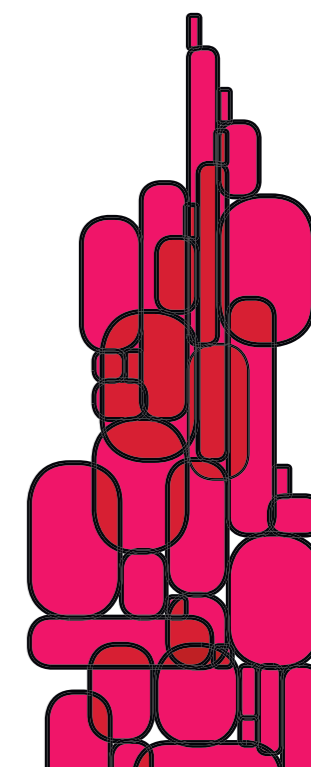
IS THE OVERALL
VALUE INVESTED,
AND UP TO
SEPTEMBER 2018,
35% OF THE
ESTIMATED VALUE
HAD ALREADY
BEEN INVESTED,
EQUIVALENT TO R\$
60,300.00.

In addition to these partnerships, the group has the support from the Project of Sustainable Development from Cariri, Seridó and Curimataú, known as Procace, since 2015, and aims to support the structuring of the community kitchen experience, aiming to generate income, promote local development to support family farming, focusing on food and nutritional security, providing low-cost products that value the eating habits already existing in the Oziel Pereira settlement—all with in a sustainable way

As tools to achieve these objectives, it is planned to build a community kitchen and the acquisition of equipment and utensils such as: industrial stove, oven, horizontal freezer , industrial mill, industrial blender, food processor, industrial mixer, stainless steel table, cabinets, digital balance, drinker and refresher, in addition to training on food production, management and marketing.



PRODUCTION PROCESS
FOR DELIVERY IN THE
NATIONAL SCHOOL
FEEDING PROGRAM
(PNAE)



IN ECONOMY, WITH THE SALES OF THE PRODUCTION FOR PNAE AND ORDERS FOR DINNER AND LUNCHES, BESIDES THE SNACKS SOLD IN THE AGROECOLOGICAL FAIR, THE RESULTS OF INCOME GENERATION WERE OBSERVED WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF BUYING HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES; MOTORCYCLES AND BICYCLES TO ENSURE MOBILITY; AND ANIMALS TO WIDEN THEIR FARMING



REGARDING GENDER ISSUES, THEY RECKON THERE IS A WIDER DIVISION OF REPRODUCTIVE CHORES AND LESS VIOLENCE AT HOME, AND THIS HAPPENS ESPECIALLY DUE TO THE PROMOTION OF DEBATE AND SENSITIZATION OF THE FAMILIES REGARDING THE FAIR DIVISION OF WORK, AS WELL AS ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS



THEY TOOK PART IN THE CONFECTIONERY COURSE AND RECEIVED WOMEN FROM OTHER PLACES FOR AN EXCHANGE AMONG RURAL WOMEN PROMOTED BY PROCASE IN 2017. AND IN THE PREVIOUS TWO YEARS, TWO REPRESENTANTS OF THE GROUP HAVE JOINED THE SAME EXCHANGE PROGRAM IN OTHER MUNICIPALITIES



STILL IN 2017, PROCASE PERFORMED A TRAINING FOR THREE WOMEN IN THE GROUP, WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE LICENSING COMMISSION, WITH THE INTENTION OF CARRYING OUT THE PURCHASES FORESEEN IN THE PROJECT, AS A WAY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE AUTONOMY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THIS EXPERIENCE



THE TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE LIFE OF THE DAISIES



THE COMPLETION OF THE PROCASE INVESTMENTS HAS CREATED A PERSPECTIVE OF STRENGTHENING AND PROJECTION IN THE DAISIES GROUP. THE KITCHEN AREA HAS A BIGGER AREA, DESTINED TO PRODUCTION AND COMMERCIALIZATION. THE WOMEN INTEND TO USE THIS COMMERCIALIZATION AREA AS A "RURAL BISTRO" TO SELL PRODUCTS OF THE LOCAL FAMILY AGRICULTURE, BESIDES SERVING MEALS



TO STRENGTHEN THIS PLANNING, AN EXCHANGE ON THIS THEME IS BEING PLANNED FOR 2019, SO THAT RURAL TOURISM IS PROMOTED, GIVEN THAT THIS REGION IS PART OF TOURISTIC ROUTES, SUCH AS THE CAMINHOS DO FRIO AND ROTA GASTRONÔMICA DO BREJO. TRAININGS ON JAM PRODUCTION AND ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY ARE ALSO FORESEEN



RURAL TOURISM IS A POSSIBILITY FOR INCOME GENERATION, SINCE IT WIDENS THE LOCAL MARKET FOR CONSUMING PRODUCTS FROM FAMILY AGRICULTURE, ESPECIALLY ORGANIC ONES, AND PROMOTED THE RECOGNITION OF RURAL CULTURE AND DIVERSITY. IT IS ALSO A WAY TO SENSITIZE THE GENERAL AUDIENCES ON THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL, CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGES OF FAMILY AGRICULTURE AND PEASANTRY



THE DAISIES GROUP REPRESENTS AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICES BY RURAL WOMEN, CONSIDERING THAT THEIR HISTORY IS MARKED BY THE PERSISTENCE AND CREATIVITY IN THE PRODUCTION AND COMMERCIAL PROJECT THEY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPING, EVEN WITH ALL THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THEM

“

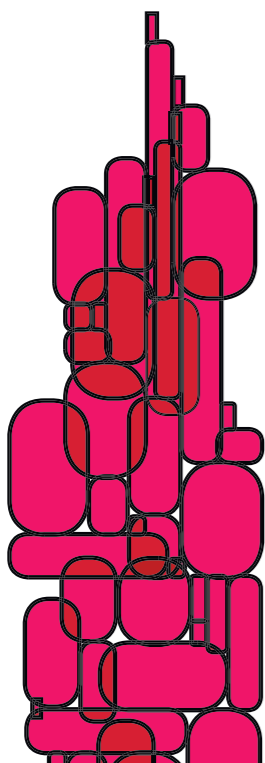
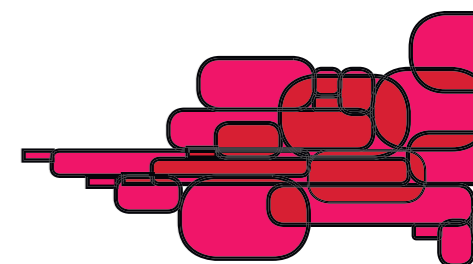
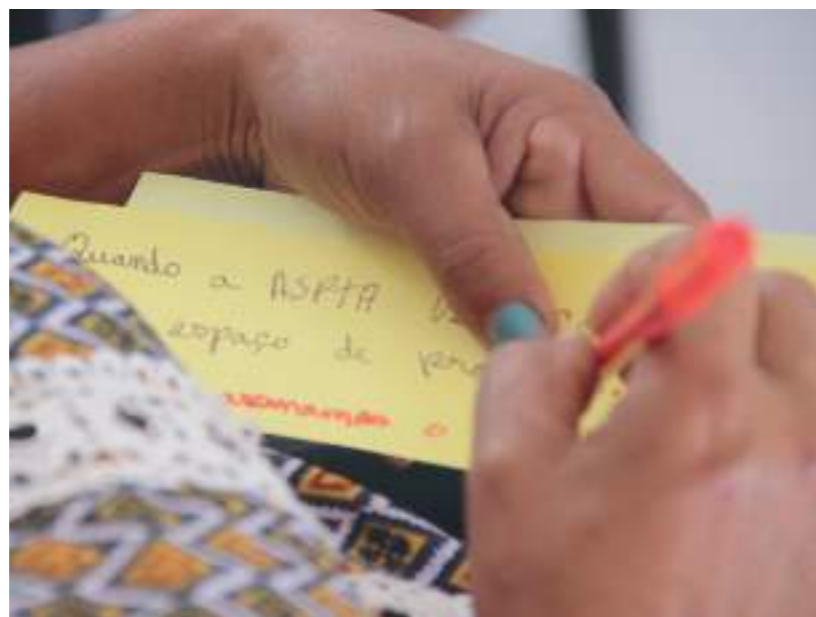
For us, what we think was fundamental, was the issue of participation as a woman, because many of us used to be oppressed, to achieve this autonomy. Some of us used to go from the house to the farm [...] not today, the Kitchen was the moment of strength and liberation for many of us.”

ADILMA, 47 YEARS OLD



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

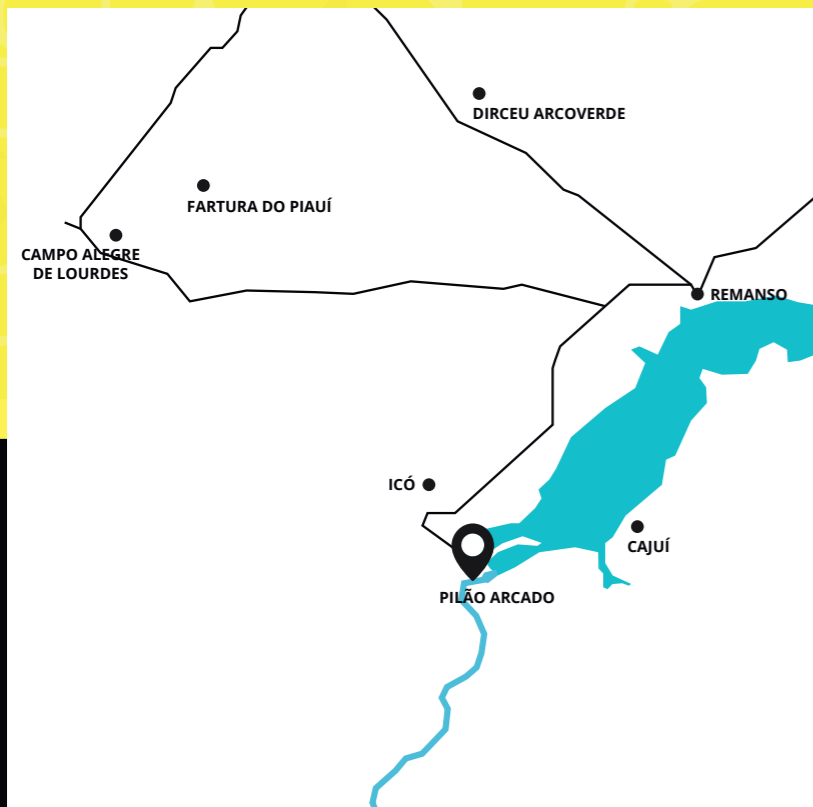
Maria d'Oliveira (Procasa's Gender Advisor); Maria Aparecida Henriques (Human Development Manager from Procasa); Samantha Pimentel (Procasa's Communication Advisor); Kilma Silva (coordinator of the URG of Curimataú); Andreane da Silva (Cooptera technician); and all the “daisies” that are part of this inspiring experience.





8. The Sharing of Knowledge and Experiences in the Women's Network of Sertão de São Francisco/ba

REGION BENEFITED
BY THE ACTIONS OF
THE PRÓ-SEMIÁRIDO
PROJECT (PSA)



PILÃO ARCADO, LOCATED ON
ONE OF THE SÃO FRANCISCO
RIVER SHORES, IN THE STATE
OF BAHIA



WOMEN'S NETWORK OF THE SÃO FRANCISCO SERTÃO TERRITORY AND THE PRÓ-SEMIÁRIDO PROJECT: A PARTNERSHIP FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The Pró-Semiárido Project Project operates in 32 municipalities in the Sertão of Bahia and it is an integral part of a set of commitments by the State to advance the eradication of poverty, bringing services and investment in the amount of R\$ 300 million, through the FIDA co-financing.

Guided by the principles of agroecology, water and food stocks in production units and communities, associations and cooperatives, the inclusion of traditional peoples and communities, and the value added to products destined for markets, is focused on women and young people participation.

The project covers 59 quilombola communities, 56 backyard and pasture communities, 53 rural settlements, 288 family farmers' communities and four indigenous communities.

The resource allocated to the Social and Human Component represents 45.5% of the total costs of the project (R\$ 300 million). Of this amount, 4.4% is for gender. The specific resource for this domain has allowed actions aimed at the specific formation of the subject, for the technicians from of the project and of partner institutions.

Women's meetings have been held in the municipalities in the area covered by the project, in addition to the Women's Network.

Other activities of the Gender Advisory Office of the Pró-Semiárido are the training of young women and men, workshops with social communicators, support for fairs, training of young rural community agents and the production of awareness material on gender issues.

Altogether, approximately 380 women, two or three representatives of each rural community in the municipalities involved, have already taken the workshops on violence against women. They have made a commitment to multiply the knowledge they have acquired to at least one other woman. Many of them shared the content of the workshops in women's groups, meetings in educational institution and in the religious context, as they pointed out during the assembly, in Pilão Arcado.

These themes of the formations of women who participate in the Network are extremely important in the region, considering the high levels of violence against women, already recorded. And what is important in this regard is how the formations encourage the group and impact their lives, from the affective dimension to the productive dimension. And in this respect, it is possible to identify, within the Network's experience, several initiatives that have generated income and economic autonomy for these women.

“

The training focused on the understanding of who the woman is. What matters is finding out what your place is in society, and then you do what you want to.

MARGARIDA,
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
MUNICIPALITY OF REMANSO IN
THE WOMEN'S NETWORK

“

The Maria da Penha Law brought visibility. The anniversary of the Law must be celebrated, because the violence was also therebefore it, but nobody knew. This is different today now we have women going to the police station, looking for it, denouncing it.”

SOCORRO, REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE WOMEN'S NETWORK



PRÓ-SEMIÁRIDO PROJECT

THE PRÓ-SEMIÁRIDO PROJECT WORKS ALONG WITH THE NETWORK ACCORDING TO THE DEMANDS BROUGHT BY THE WOMEN. THE TRAININGS PROMOTED BY THE WO WOMEN'S MEN NETWORK ARE MADE FEASIBLE BY THIS SUPPORT AND BY THOSE FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS', BESIDES THE WOMEN'S OWN RESOURCES, GATHERED BY SELLING RAFFLE TICKETS.

R\$ 67.750,00

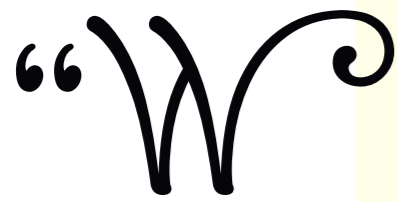
IT WAS THE RESOURCE THAT ALLOWED FOR THE PROVISION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE TRAINING. THE PRÓ-SEMIÁRIDO INVESTMENTS UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF 2019 REACHED R\$ 32,000 IN TRANSPORTATION, R\$ 21,000 IN FOOD, R\$ 10,00 IN ACCOMMODATIONS, R\$ 4,750.00 IN RENTING STALLS FOR THE FAIRS

2017 / 2018

THE PROJECT'S PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NETWORK WAS MORE STRONGLY ESTABLISHED AFTER 2017, WITH THE WOMEN'S NETWORK ASSEMBLY, WHEN THEY DEFINED THE THEME TO BE ADRESSED 2018: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN. SEVEN MEETINGS WERE CARRIED OUT IN THE SÃO FRANCISCO COUNTRYSIDE IDENTITY TERRITORY, NAMELY: JUAZEIRO, WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF 76 WOMEN; REMANSO, WITH 50 WOMEN; CAMPO ALEGRE DE LOURDES, WITH 40 WOMEN; SENTO SÉ, 40 WOMEN; CANUDOS AND UAUÁ (PERFORMED TOGETHER), WITH 50 WOMEN; CASA NOVA, 40 WOMEN; AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF PILÃO ARCADE, 84 WOMEN



THE WORKSHOPS HAPPEN IN TWO DAYS, WITH SCHEDULES FOCUSED ON THE DISCUSSION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, IN WHICH PARTICIPANTS ARE INFORMED ON THE TYPES OF VIOLENCE ESTABLISHED IN THE MARIA DA PENHA LAW: PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, SEXUAL, PATRIMONIAL, AND MORAL VIOLENCE. BESIDES THAT, THE WORKSHOPS ESTABLISH A TIME WITH A DEBATING TABLE, COMPOSED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES, A PERSON FROM THE WOMEN'S NETWORK, AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM LOCAL SUPPORT ENTITIES/NGOS. IN THE MEETINGS, FAIRS ARE ALSO CARRIED OUT, WITH THE PRODUCTION OF FEMALE PARTICIPANTS.



oman, please, help me / Cause I cannot walk alone / Alone I am also fine / But I am better off with you.” This is the ciranda sung by the women of the Network, who, hand in hand and in a circle, evoke the wisdom of the collective, the wealth of solidarity and sorority, the beauty and, in some cases, the bitterness of being a woman.

Thus, the Assembly of the Women’s Network of the Identity Territory of the Sertão do São Francisco, in the municipality of Pilão Arcado, state of Bahia, began in August 2018—when the stories for this publication were collected.

Eighty-six women participated, who, from the first moment of this meeting, established a commitment to mutual support and encouragement and used the tucum ring to symbolize this commitment.

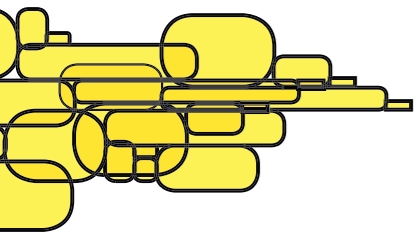
The history of the Women’s Network converges stories of violence against women and the struggle experienced in their unequal family relations. It began in 1988, when women from the neighboring municipality of Remanso joined the NGO “Centro Luiz Nunes”, linked to the ecclesiastical movement of the Catholic Church.

At that time, with the support of the church, they began to hold meetings to bring these women from the municipality, so that they could become literate, get their personal documents, since most of them did not have an identity card, or even to talk about personal health and hygiene, for example.



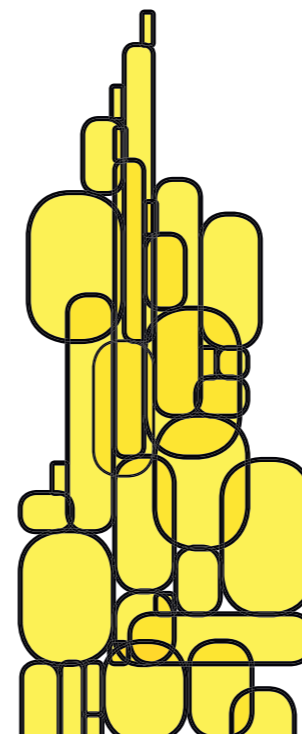
Here in Remanso, men used to kill women as if they used to kill some animal and let it go, they disregarded the law and nobody did anything. Sometimes the family picked them up and bury them, and nobody did anything. The man did not leave here, he continued like nothing happened, he was not arrested, nothing happened.”

ONE OF THE STATEMENTS ABOUT THE SITUATION OF VIOLENCE THAT THE WOMEN EXPERIENCED AT THAT TIME SAID



I AM
BETTER OFF
WITH YOU.”

CIRANDA INTONED BY
THE WOMEN OF THE
NETWORK



Facing a situation in which they were not heard, they decided to organize, in 1997, a protest, one of the milestones in the Network's history. The demonstration aimed at drawing attention of the authorities to preventive and punitive actions regarding violence against women. By 2000, women were organized as a movement, called "Água Viva." From then on, with the support of the Fishing Pastoral Council (CPP) and the local diocese, that they formed the Women's Network, which connected women from the ten

municipalities of the Sertão do São Francisco Territory: Uauá, Campo Alegre de Lourdes, Canudos, Casa Nova, Curaçá, Juazeiro, Pilão Arcado, Remanso, Sento Sé and Sobradinho.

The Network is a political and social organization formed by women artisans, fisherwoman, remaining quilombolas and family farmers. It is composed of a general coordinator, a secretary and a treasurer, as well as representatives from each municipality, elected every two years.



THE GROUP' HONEY
PRODUCTION HOUSE

“
TO CHANGE
SOCIETY THE WAY
WE WANT,
PARTICIPATING
WITHOUT FEAR OF
BEING A WOMAN.”

CIRANDA INTONED BY
THE WOMEN DURING THE
ASSEMBLY OF
THE NETWORK, IN
PILÃO ARCADEO).



FAIRY HANDS
GROUP

In these thirty years of existence, the Network has had as its main focus the social formation of these women, thought out of an annual meeting in which all the representatives of the municipalities, leaderships and institutions partners of the Network gather, which are: the Catholic Church; the Pró-Semiárido Government Project; the entity Regional Institute of Appropriate Small Agriculture and Livestock Farming (IRPAA); the Regional Development and Action Company (CAR); Advisory Service to Rural Population Organizations (Sasop), Service of Socio-environmental Assistance in the Field and City (Sajuc) and the Commercialization Center of the Caatinga Cooperative.

Each assembly is held in the chosen municipality according to the local vulnerabilities, aiming to strengthen the

women's group of that locality. Each representative reports on the actions taken during the year, promotes a political formation, and builds the planning of future actions, jointly defining the main theme to be addressed. With the theme defined, workshops are organized in the nine municipalities of the region.

The themes discussed by the group are related to women-related issues, such as self-esteem, citizenship, regularization of documentation and domestic violence. The latter was chosen in October 2017 to be addressed in on 2018. And it is in this context that the Pró-Semiárido Project, originated from the partnership between the state government and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (FIDA), has strongly supported the women's initiative.

“BALAIO DA CAATINGA”: GROUP FOR THE PROCESSING OF CASSAVA

Ten family farmers in the municipality of Sento Sé, who worked on cassava tapioca production—a raw material for various snacks in the region—were organized in a group known as Balaio da Caatinga. In 2008, through the Women’s Network, they carried out a training to work on this processing in an improved way.

With this support, they were able to access the National Program for Strengthening Family Agriculture (Pronaf), with the Declaration of Aptitude to Pronaf (DAP), provided by the Rural Workers Union of the municipality, after proving the link to a rural property. They then obtained financing to build an equipped kitchen for the processing of tapioca in products such as sequilhos and tapioca flour biscuits. Margarida tells us, as the representative of the group, that “the intention was for them to have their own income and get a little freedom.”

And to market these products strategically, the ten women joined the Sento Sé Beekeepers Association and were able to access the Food Acquisition Program (FAP). They sold the products for two years. Then, through the National School Feeding Program (PNAE), via city hall, they began to deliver the products in the municipal schools, to be consumed by the children.

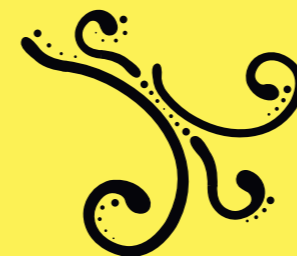
In addition to this monthly supply of snacks in schools, Balaio da Caatinga started to sell the cookies, sprinkle cookies and fruit pulps in the local commerce, in the neighborhood and in the fairs sell the cookies, sprinkle cookies and fruit pulps

And this happened after they established the strategy of strengthening the short marketing network, bringing together groups from different communities.

COMMERCIALIZATION CENTER OF THE CAATINGA COOPERATIVES

It all started when the Commercialization Center was still called “Sabor Natural do Sertão” Network. The name of Commercialization Center of in 2017, but this history started fifteen years ago. Farmers from the Sertão do São Francisco Territory, who processed fruits, organized themselves to seek knowledge and negotiate the sale collectively and created the “Natural do Sertão” Network. Today, the group has several productive activities: besides the processing of the fruit, there is the processing of cassava, fish, handicrafts, and it has a store of family agriculture products, in the center of the municipality of Juazeiro. The process of formalization of the Central and the construction of the commercial space received the support of the Pró-Semiárido Project.

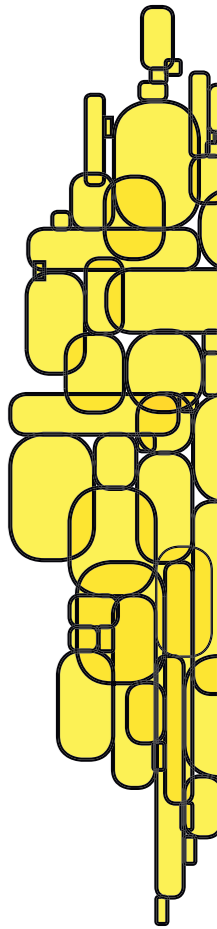
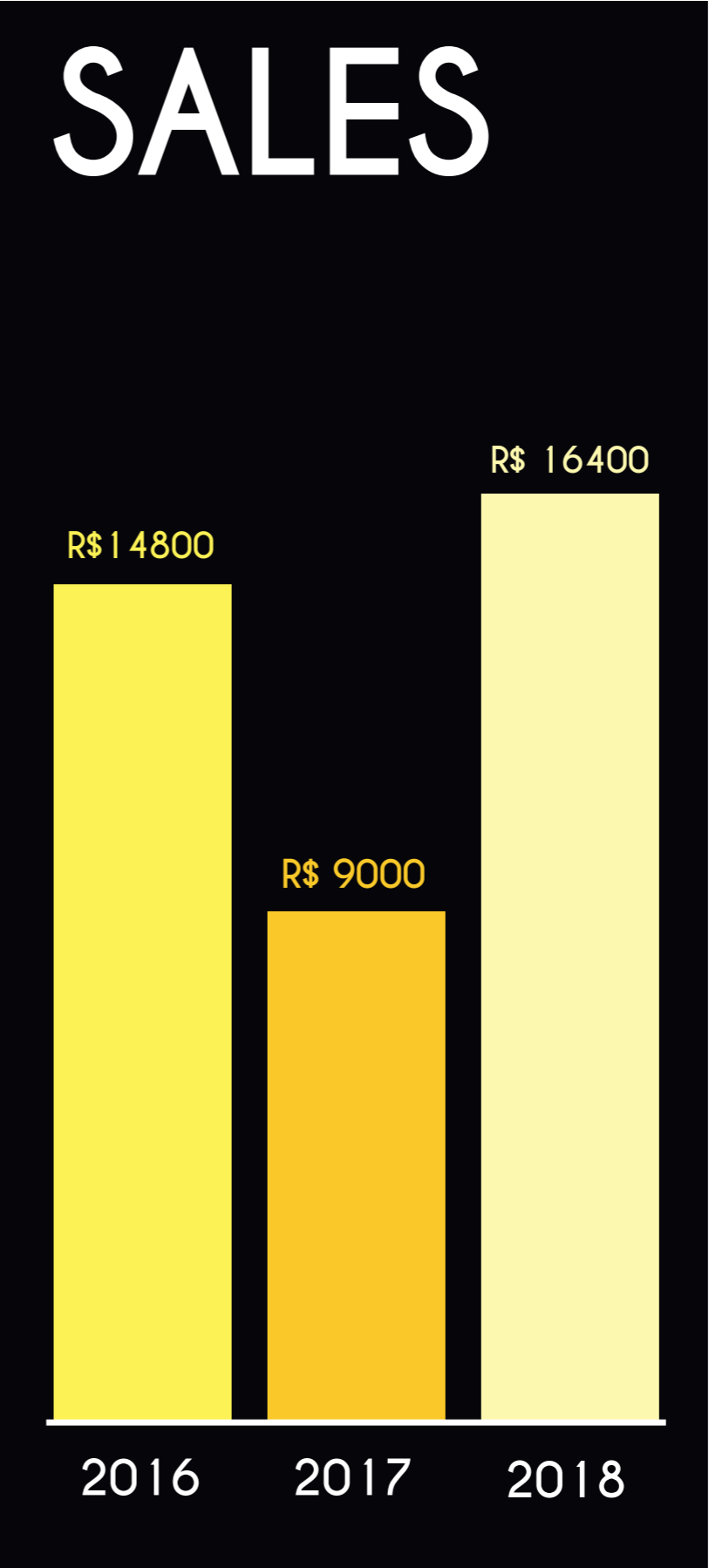
Several productive groups of the Women’s Network were strengthened with the support of the Commercialization Center of the Caatinga Cooperatives, which opened doors to establish new contacts and partnerships.



Continuing the story, Margarida says: “we are linked to this association not only to sell, but also to articulate with other groups, other people to guide some things in the municipality. Someone said, but why do you keep doing this? It is not good business, money is little.’ And I respond: because we are not only interested in money, but also in the organization, in the political participation, mainly. We want to make you come to us, but you do not have to stay here. You have to get out of here and go there in your community and multiply the work.”

Uilma is another woman who is part of the Balaio da Caatinga. She also processes cassava, but not in the same community as Margarida: “The financial processing is very good, but the benefit of knowledge is much better. With the teaching, we go faster.”

WOMEN FROM THE BALAIO DA CAATINGA GROUP.



BEEKEEPERS GROUP “MÃOS DE FADA”, ORGANIZED IN REMANSO, BAHIA

The “Mãos de Fada” group in the municipality of Remanso was made up of eighteen women, but in a very different field from the current productive activity—they used to make cleaning products. But due to the difficulty of acquiring raw material and accessing retail outlets, they stopped producing them.

The group remained organized and, through the Women’s Network, they were trained for beekeeping production and, in 2009, benefited from the project of the São Francisco and Parnaíba Valley Development Company (Codevasf) and the “Articulação Sindical”, which provided around five boxes of bee for each woman. It was there that they began to raise bees to produce honey, propolis, wax and soap. Today they already have eight boxes of bee each.

In parallel to the beekeeping activity, women work making cake, jelly, mousse, sweets, pulp, compote, liquor and handicrafts, and provide all production for the PNAE, for the neighborhood, in free fairs and for resellers.

The collective production is made in an equipped space, earned by them in 2017, from the money raised in a bingo. But “Casa do Mel” should be built by an agreement with the Regional Development and Action Company (CAR), as part of a an action by Pró-Semiárido, which will bring greater quality and speed in dealing with bee production.

In addition to being careful about the environment,

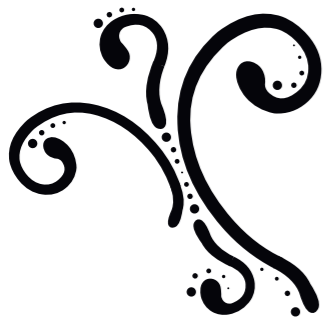
the women’s group, concerned about the desertification process, had experience with “recatingamento”, supported by the Regional Institute of Appropriate Small Agriculture and Livestock Farming (IRPAA), which is very important for the productive activity they carry out.

This activity had great recognition in the community and was pointed out as an important factor in recognizing the value of family farmers, which reflected their empowerment. Marly, one of the representatives of Balaio da Caatinga, spoke about demonstrating the strength of the group: “Before I was ashamed to say that I was a farmer, I said I was a maid. This is different today. Today I say with pride: ‘I am a farmer’” (Marly, 47).

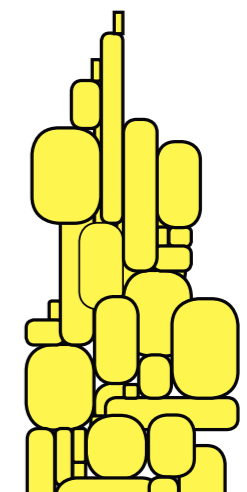
AUTONOMY

There are, in the Women’s Network, several other organizational experiences that have generated economic autonomy for women, in addition to the stories of the groups mentioned. With training, women’s self-confidence has increased.

Today, they seek alternatives to conquer not only their financial autonomy, but also the autonomy of time, which enables them to organize their own schedules and, the autonomy to claim the right division of household tasks with the family members.



UP, WOMEN DIVIDED INTO GROUPS BY MUNICIPALITIES TO CREATE STRATEGIES TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN— ASSEMBLY OF PILÃO ARCADE.



The support from the Pró-Semiárido Project—result of the partnership between the Government of Bahia and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (FIDA), through the Department of Rural Development (SRD), and executed by CAR—has been crucial to strengthen and multiply this experience. All this investment translates into income, but, mainly, in the transformation of these women's lives. They have built their own stories, committed not only to themselves, but also to the collectivity of their respective communities and life contexts.

This example of the Women's Network is a typical case of women's good practices as it permeates all dimensions of life, not only economic, but also socio-political, environmental and cultural. Also, it reaffirms the commitment of the Women's Network—to confront the socially constructed pattern of identity in which men and women are given roles only by their gender

Ivete, a 67-year-old participant, said: “Women, here, have discovered what is inequality. We left the kitchen because, before, we had to go from the kitchen to the farm. Today we found out that women have their space, and it's not just in the kitchen anymore.”



FEMINIST FAIR OF SOLIDARITY ECONOMY HELD DURING THE ASSEMBLY OF THE WOMEN'S NETWORK IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PILÃO ARCADEO.



ASSEMBLY OF WOMEN IN
PILÃO ARCADE.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Ana Elizabeth Souza Silveira de Siqueira (Pró-Semiárido's Gender Advisor); Audarian Menezes (Sasop's Technician); Gisele Maria de Oliveira de Santos (Sasop's Technician); Maria do Socorro Santos (Coordinator at the Women's Network); Sheila Dantas (responsible for the finance department at the office in Juazeiro, Pró-Semiárido); Jaqueline Soares (advisor in the Women's Network training); Domingos Ramos (local technician at IRPAA, in Sento Sé); all the women who participated in this beautiful experience of the Network, especially Margarida, from Sento Sé, and Marli, from Mãos de Fada.





THE ASSOCIATION
IS LOCATED IN THE
PASSAGEM COMMUNITY
- A VILLAGE OF WORKERS
FROM THE GONÇALVES
TEXTILE FACTORY, IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF
NEÓPOLIS/SE.



9. The power of the search by the “Formiguinhas”

WOMEN FROM BAIXO SÃO
FRANCISCO OVERCOME
POVERTY BY PRODUCING
CRAFTS



The main product of the Artisanal Association Formiguinhas em Ação are the crafts produced with leaves of the ouricury palm. Two elements make this experience in the semi-arid region of Sergipe successful: the search for partnerships that help in turning a simple productive activity into a real enterprise and the fact that , it generates income without negative environmental impacts.

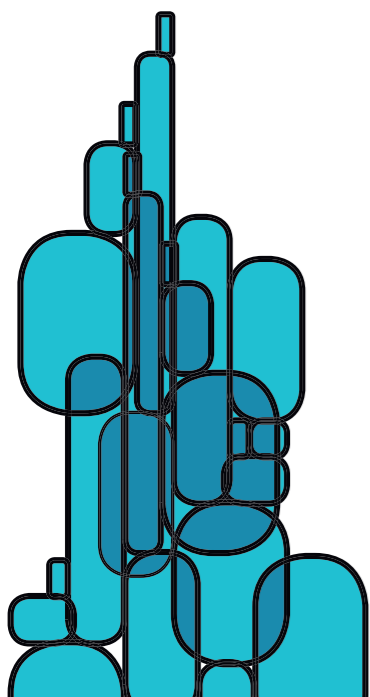
The path of the women has three phases: the first, between 2002 and 2005, with informal production; from 2005 to 2016 they learned fundamentals of marketing, perfected their products and formalized the association, supported by Sebrae. With the intervention by the Dom Távora Project funded from 2017 by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (FIDA) and the State Government of Sergipe, it was finally possible to add equipment and machinery to increase production, expand the number of participants in the productive group to 22 artisans, and diversify the products.

The association is in the community Passagem, a village of workers of the Gonçalves textile factory, in the municipality of Neópolis/SE.

BRAIDING IN THE GAPS

The Productive Investment Plan for the association aimed to cover gaps that could not be covered by other partners, mainly the expansion of collectivity and the recognition by disclosure.

To this end, financial resources were released for the acquisition of industrial sewing machines, engines, chain saws and supplies for crafting, such as paint, fabrics, sandpapers, needles, brushes, etc. It also promoted training events and technical assistance. Below, its four lines of action:



RAW MATERIAL

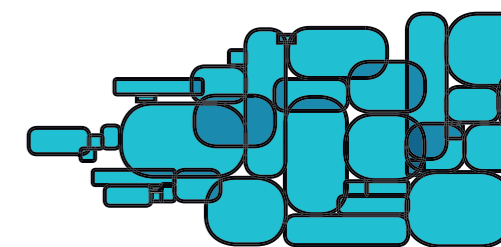
Rubenice Pereira de Santana likes narrating the story of the association. The group came about 15 years ago, when four residents of the Vila Operária da Passagem embroidered strips of rubber sandals with beads for sale. For that, they received R\$ 0.50/sandal. Then, they started to weave and embroider the sandals themselves, to then sell them at the municipality's free fair.

Tired of this routine, they decided it was time to give a new direction to their lives. They learned to professionally produce crafts with ouricury straw, as this plant is abundant in the region.

At the beginning, they sought to get a loan at Banco do Nordeste and qualification in braided ouricury straw from the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (Sebrae). They knew, then, how to make baskets, calculate their price, market them: however, their products began to go moldy in winter. With students of the Chemistry course at the Federal University of Sergipe, they learned to prepare the straw to be fungi-resistant, enhancing the quality of their products.

The group grew and, in 2007, they formed the Artisan Association Formiguinhas em Ação (Little Ants in Action).

Without disregarding the contribution of partners at all phases, this report deals with the intervention of the Dom Távora Project (PDT) from 2017, created to support Productive Investment Plans with FIDA resources.



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“While our husbands were in the weaving factory, we were alone at home without any personal perspective.”

RUBENICE PEREIRA

The first technical visit to the premises of the Association made an impression on the PDT technician, given the quality of the craftsmanship and the group’s high level of organization. On the other hand, the group needed equipment, reserves of raw materials and accessories to maintain regularity in production. An increase in the number of members would require leveling skills between old and new participants. Little was made regarding promotion.

In a meeting with all members, Dom Távora Project proposed to make financial investments to enhance this productive initiative. To do so, the group would need to expand. However, the resources applied only to individuals favored by social programs or Declaration of Aptitude (DAP), one of the criteria adopted by Dom Távora to select beneficiaries.

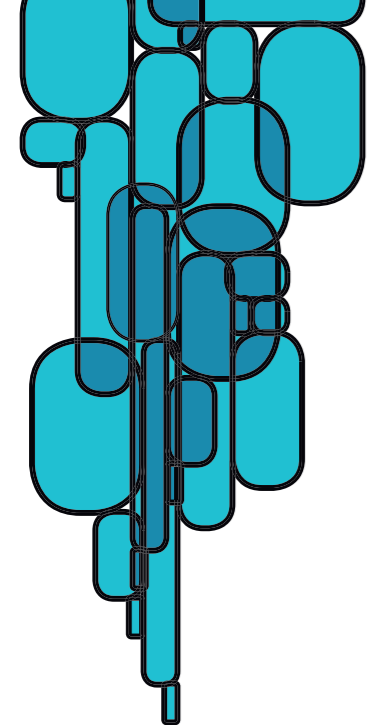
To elaborate the Investment Plan, the state coordination of PDT hired the consultant Erika Leão de Oliveira, of the National iteration of the United Nations Development Program:

“The involvement of the women in the process of project elaboration was rich. They rescued the group trajectory, and saw in it their possibilities and potential.”

The technical consultant acknowledges that the fact of not being an expert in the business of crafts limited the intervention plan, which was compensated by drawing up the project in a participatory way. Another negative factor was that the Plan did not include the rent or purchase of a shop outside the Working-class Village, an old demand of the artisans, “because it would raise the project costs,” according to their testimony.



Still in progress in November 2018, the implementation phase has already formed a bidding team for the purchase of materials. They acquired the first equipment, such as industrial sewing and embroidery machines, in addition to various supplies, totaling 88 items. The team also promoted training for using the new equipment and for the social and financial management of the project, through the Institute of Human Development Assistance (IADH), in agreement with the UNDP.



The intervention drew new artisans, with different skills. To keep the quality level, the rookies follow training courses and work with greater regularity. There are now groups that specialize in the production of lamps, crocheted, dish towels, biscuit crafts, cross stitch, and painted towels. “We’re not depending solely on straw products,” says the treasurer, Jaqueline Santos.

The artisan women themselves identify qualitative results at a collective level: expansion and diversification of products with better finishing; addition of ouricury straw to products they already crafted; improvement in product presentation and packaging; better control of production and inventory. These are evidence of the maturing of business management, which includes calculating the product price and dividing labor.

For such systematization, it was not possible to access the diagnosis prior to PDT, made by the Agricultural Development Company of the State of Sergipe (Emdagro), which is responsible for the monitoring, preventing one to compare the effect of the actions. Also for monitoring the project, a more constant presence of the technician proved to be a challenge.

The Formiguinhas association does not have production control and stock spreadsheets; the control is done through a common cash book. They are waiting for computer equipment, provided for in the project, for a more organized control.

ADJUSTMENTS

One of the peculiarities of this group is the pursuit



For the name, we were inspired by the fable of the ants that work by cooperating with one another in the summer, so they have a food reserve in the winter. It also has a lot to do with the harvesting: one cannot dry straw in the winter. That is why we have to do a stock in the summer, just like those little ants.”

THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION, ALEXSANDRA DA SILVA, EXPLAINS THE ORIGIN OF THE METAPHOR:



“

We have gained much by having our own bidding group. It's been hard because we have never done it but, with the help of the Dom Távora Project, we will get to the end of all purchases with this learning,”

LIGIA OLIVEIRA,
OF THE BIDDING COMMISSION,
REPORTED.



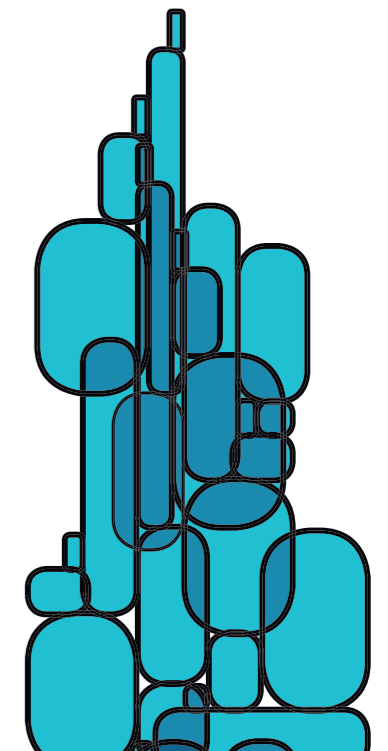
and implementation of organizational and control measures of the institution and production. The Capacity Development Component of PDT held advice for the construction of inventory control spreadsheets. The advisory body of the Dom Távora Project introduced inventory control sheets. It also taught production control (quantity, type of product and name of the artisan) both additions to the existing cash books, monthly controlled. The next step will be the creation of a spreadsheet with the input stock control.

Another strong point of the group is the division of labor, both managerial as productive with teams for direction, supervisory board, Dom Távora Project control committee, bidding team and cleaning crew, and formiguinhas.

Of the 24 associates, two are men and take care of the collection of straws, and 22 are women organized as to their expertise. Fifteen of them produce crafts with straw with capacity for forty pieces a month, whereas two paint a hundred pieces on fabric. Simultaneously, four women work with biscuit, creating fifty pieces, but it takes only to crocheters for fifty items and only one for fifty artisanal lamps.

Most participants, between 29 and 45 years old, consider themselves to be in full active life. They do not recognize as a limiting factor the fact only three of them are younger.

What they consider indeed limiting is their own low education level, as well as not having someone to leave their children with to participate in collective activities.



INCREASED INCOME

From the individual point of view, the improved self-esteem of the women is clear: today, they contribute to the family income and have a professional specialization. Rubenice Pereira, vice president, states:

“I wake up early, do the housekeeping, prepare the kids to go to school and go to work in the crafts. I work from eight to ten hours a day, happy with the results. Much of the construction material for my house was acquired by selling crafts and teaching handicraft courses. I was hired by the State Department of Social Action to teach the braided straw in other municipalities. I wasn't expecting this invitation from the Government to be an instructor on ouricury straw handicrafts. It was a very happy experience.

She is already the second associate who managed to leave the working-class village and buy their own house. Others have already acquired home appliances, motorcycles and contribute to the family income.



The group evaluates as contributory factors for strengthening the organization the initiative of pursuing partnerships every time they faced difficulties. Besides that, the women are aware of the equal important the group's union, their artisan expertise, and the performance of the coordination and the group.

With six types of crafts, they produce costing from R\$ 7.00 (a dish cloth) to R\$ 100.00 (a large mandala) According to the book of accountings of the association, new artisans have an income between R\$ 150.00 to R\$ 200.00. The oldest ones, in turn, with greater skill in production, can produce more and achieve a monthly income between R\$ 300.00 and R\$ 500.00. They receive from what they can produce and pass on part of the earning to the revolving fund of the association.

According to the internal rules of the groups, which they follow faithfully every associated contributes monthly with R\$ 20.00, being R\$ 5.00 in cash and R\$ 15.00 in items, resulting in R\$ 440.00 of income for the association. In addition, they return the value of the raw materials to the revolving fund.



By regulation, yet, each artisan is committed to deliver at least five items for sale per month, totaling a hundred and ten pieces. Considering their estimated average price of R\$ 30.00 per item, they reach the value of R\$ 3,300.00 in products/month.

In November 2018, period in which this article was drawn, the association had a stock of 153 handcrafted items for sale at the headquarters, totaling R\$ 3,810.00.

Marketing is a bottleneck. The physical store is located in the working-class village, a difficult to reach place. To boost business, they are waiting for the creation of a virtual store provided for in the project, but not yet implemented.

The association is registered in the Brazilian Handicraft Program of the Federal Government, which gives right to participation in fairs in Aracaju, Belo Horizonte, São Paulo – in addition to regional and local fairs. In such occasions, they manage to triple the normal monthly income, as the quality of their craft became a reference.

They set their minds on a sustainability plan for the group, or the creation of a fund of financial autonomy, as an evolution of the current revolving fund, already thinking about continuity after the project.



OURICURI

The main raw material of this craft comes from nature: ouricury palm leaf. But that is not cause for environmental concern, as the group adopted as a principle the sustainable extraction of straw, not to cause premature death of the plant and extinction of the species. Therefore, they remove only one new leaf per plant, collecting only once per year from the same plant, in addition to the alternation of the geographical areas of collection. With these measures, they preserve about 600 plants per year since they remove 100 straws, the equivalent to the number of plants for six annual collections.

Another contributing factor for sustainability was the diversification of the craft. Thus, an increasing number of plants can be preserved. Nonetheless, the predatory collection for broom manufacturing, still practiced in the region, lead to the death of young plants.



TO COMBAT THE FUNGI OF DRY NATURAL STRAW, APPLY A TREATMENT WITH GARLIC AND FABRIC SOFTENER, THEN GIVE IT A THERMAL SHOCK WITH A MIXTURE OF WATER AND ALCOHOL



TO TAKE A COURSE TO IMPROVE FINISHING, AS IT ADDS VALUE TO THE PRODUCTS



TO MAINTAIN THE PRODUCT QUALITY, EVEN IF THE GROUPS EXPANDS;



TECHNICAL LESSONS



TO DIVERSIFY THE PRODUCTS, IN CONSTANT ALIGNMENT WITH THE MARKET



TO COMBINE STRAW WITH OTHER MATERIALS, TO SAVE THE PALM TREES

CLOSURE

We have dealt here with a group of women artisans from low-income families, who formed an association in a working-class village, in the municipality of Neópolis/SE, where social indicators are low. With more than 80% of the population living on the Bolsa Família program, almost 30% of the young people do not work or study, contributing to the 22.7% illiteracy rate of the population.

They searched for partnerships to achieve what they believed in; they got a place to work, lent by Fábrica de Tecidos Peixoto; they raised loans from Banco do Nordeste and obtained financial resources from Dom Távora Project. When the group needed to combat the fungi from the dry natural straw, they sought help from Universidade Federal de Sergipe.

Sebrae and Emdagro helped them in fulfilling the need to organize the group's production and institucionalize the association, . They overcame all difficulties thanks to the “power of the search”.



MANAGEMENT LESSONS



FORMALITY

IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR, THE GROUP DOES NOT ADVANCE. ONLY WHEN THE ASSOCIATION WAS CREATED, IT WAS POSSIBLE TO MAKE INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS.



SALES

THE GROUP STILL MISSES A TRADE REPRESENTATIVE TO BOOST SALES, BUT THAT DEMAND WAS NOT PERCEIVED IN THE ELABORATION OF THE PROJECT.



PRICING

FAIR PRICE IS THE SUM OF THE VALUE OF INPUTS USED AND THE NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED.

10 • Acknowledgments

Gratitude is a special feeling. This feeling of gratitude is with us since we began the search for stories of women who make a difference in the lives of other women or in the community they live.

Reaching the end of this publication, we want to thank many special people who turned this idea into this beautiful publication in your hands. Gratitude to the advisers, Sarah and Ana Paula, who hit the road visiting all cities with so many enriching stories and recorded more than facts and photos; they understood the feelings of women in every conversation and succeeded transcribing every emotion.

We also thank all the projects supported by FIDA, in the name of all the coordinators and the gender advisers, who facilitated the travels, visits and conversations in search of the records of these beautiful and strong reports: Elizabeth Siqueira (Pró Semiárido Project, in Bahia), Maria d'Oliveira and Maria Aparecida and Samantha Pimentel (PROCASE Project, in Paraíba), Julia Aires and Lucia Araujo

(Viva o Semiárido Project, in Piauí), Graciete Gonçalves and Geraldo Firmino (Dom Hélder Câmara Project, in Pernambuco) and Francisca Sena, Rocicleide Silva (Paulo Freire Project, Ceará) and Amarize Soares and Ednilson Barbosa (Dom Távora Project, in Sergipe).

In a very special way, our gratitude will be recorded here to each woman cited in these inspiring stories of this book, for it was through their pains and joys that today we can show other women and men real examples that it is always worth resisting, believing and fighting for their ideal. And

it is worth dreaming in a group and uniting for a world with more justice, respect and equality between women and men.

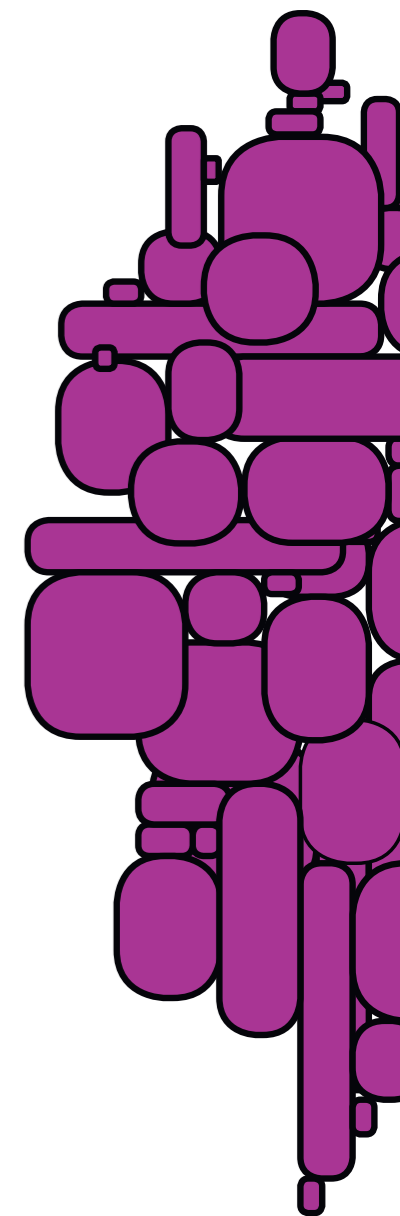
These are examples that together we can transform dreams into achievements.

The stories recorded here have a political and social function for women, that inspires us to move forward, united, in a society that needs more and more good causes and lessons.

Semear Internacional Program has a strategic role, aimed at exchanging experiences between people and countries, and thought that, by disseminating stories of women that are fighting and winning, they could do much more than just exchanging good examples, but transforming lives with the lessons of great women.

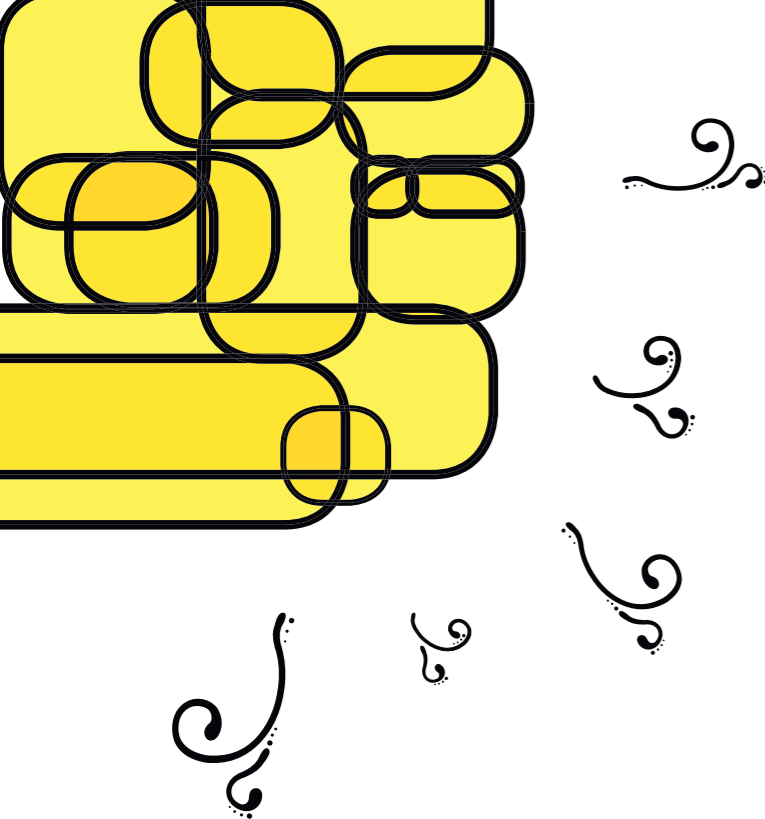
FIDA is delighted to be able to collaborate with the dissemination of these cases. Knowing that the projects FIDA supports have been modifying the reality of women, girls and rural communities is undoubtedly our biggest goal achieved. And we emphasize here that the social, political, financial and technological advances achieved by these women directly change the quality of life of their relatives, with more health, safety, leisure and reinforce the empowerment of women in society.

Our thanks to each person involved in these good practices narrated here, without you we would not be able to make these stories reach so many hands right now.



THIS IS
NOT MY
“CIRANDA”
ONLY, IT IS
OURS!





REALIZAÇÃO

