

ervaUna Quarterly Report 2007-1

Diversified Organic Agroforestry – an Innovation to Rural Development in Southern Bahia, Brazil

Report No. 8 1 January - 31 March 2007

24 April 2007

Authors: Richard Bolli & Barbara Suter, Swiss technical consultants, Una-BA info@ervauna.org
Sources: Field Report No. 7 of 05.02.2007 (in Portuguese; see www.ervauna.ch), and personal communication by Fábio & Linde Nobre, field coordinators, Una-BA fabio@ervauna.org

→ Capacity Building	→ Organic Farming	→ Diversification
→ Agroforestry	→ Rainforest Conservation	→ Medicinal Plants

Resumo

O pre-projeto (em ação desde 4-2005) foi terminado no dia 31° de Março, e começou a fase 1 do projeto ervaUna (2007-2009). Nesse trimestre foram alcançados três resultados: 2 sub-projetos (de 4) da associação estão no caminho: O Projeto Banana-da-Terra (4 produtores ativos) e o Projeto Piaçava (2 ativos). Um produtor integrou com sucesso hortaliça entre as bananas e está vendendo na feira. A associação organizou um dia de visita numa fazenda orgânica para obter estímulos (com 20 participantes).

Como já foi o caso nos três trimestres passados, o interesse, a motivação e participação no projeto ervaUna continua sendo mínima. As visitas intensas do gerente e coordenador local ficaram quase sem resultados: Apenas 14 de 24 famílias estão ativas. Não houve dia de campo faz um ano (esse método de trabalho foi sugerida pela associação mesma), e não foram feitos compostos. Com a chegada dos dois consultores suíços, a equipe técnica vai avaliar a situação e ao mesmo tempo tentar a retomar e mobilizar as atividades no campo. O coordenador iniciou um curso de noite e grátis de alfabetização para adultos da Queimada Grande, com a professora paga pela prefeitura. Os cursos acontecem todos os dias desde 1-2006 e, segundo informações, são frequentadas por até 10 pessoas.

Zusammenfassung

Am 31. März 2007 wurde aufgrund der vollständig akquirierten Projektgelder (seit Herbst 2006) und den am 4. Februar 2007 bewilligten Visa für die Schweizer Projektleiter der Übergang vom Vorläuferprojekt (das seit April 2005 im Gange war) zur Projektphase 1 (2007-2009) vollzogen.

In diesem Quartal wurden drei Resultate erbracht: Zwei assoziations-eigene Unterprojekte (von vier) verlaufen gemäss Plan: das Bananenprojekt (4 Bauern aktiv) und das Piaçava-Palmfaserprojekt (2 Bauern aktiv). Ein Bauer hat erfolgreich Mischkulturen von Gemüse im Bananenfeld integriert und verkauft auf dem lokalen Samstagsmarkt. Die Assoziation besuchte mit 20 Bauern eine biologisch produzierende Fazenda in der Nachbarschaft, um Anregungen aufzunehmen.

Wie in den vorangegangenen drei Quartalen sind Interesse, Motivation und Beteiligung der Kleinbauern gering. Die intensive Besuchstätigkeit des lokalen Projektleiters und Koordinators erzielte kaum Resultate: 14 von 24 Familien sind (mehr oder weniger) aktiv. Es fand wiederum kein Feldarbeitstag statt (der letzte liegt nun mehr als ein Jahr zurück; diese Arbeitsmethode wurde von der Assoziation selber vorgeschlagen), und es wurden keine Komposte mehr angelegt. Mit der Arbeitsaufnahme der Schweizer Projekt-Mitteleiter im April 2007 wird die Situation von Grund auf evaluiert. Gleichzeitig wird versucht, die Feldaktivitäten bei einer grossen Zahl von Familien neu anzustossen.

Ausserhalb des Arbeitsplans hat der Projektkoordinator einen von der Gemeinde bezahlten Alphabetisierungskurs für Erwachsene im Landschulhaus initiiert. Der tägliche, kostenlose Abendkurs findet seit Januar 2006 statt und wurde bis anhin von bis zu 10 Frauen und Männern der Queimada Grande besucht.

News

The results within the reporting period have been produced by a very small number of farmers, who successfully diversified their crops. Two of five self-organized sub-projects of the association are on due course. The activities in organic farming such as composting, mulching and legume planting, however, have almost been abandoned, and participation of smallholders is minimal.

Smallholders' Association, Community Matters and Social Life. The association is facing the serious illness of its president and a further member of the board. As the first secretary has left the association, the community matters rest on the vice president, Linde Nobre, and the 2nd secretary, Sr. Gildásio. The participation at the association meetings continues to be low, and there is only little cooperation among farmers in field work. No single field day has taken place since more than 12 months now. Thanks to the initiative of the local project coordinator, a free daily alphabetization course for adults has taken place from January 2006 and is allegedly assisted by up to 10 families of the Queimada Grande area.

Project Administration, Donor and Public Relations. We thank very much: Schützen Rheinfelden AG, who once more contributed Fr. 10'000.- to the project (www.schuetzen-rheinfelden.ch). The organic-dynamic farm Dotterfelderhof at D-Bad Vilbel, whose families offered a most interesting and helpful stay for the Swiss consultants last year, donated Euro 400,00 (www.dotterfelderhof.de). The association "Vereinigung PRO MATA ATLÂNTICA" (Swiss NGO and official partner of the ervaUna project with currently 60 permanent members) held its general assembly on March 14th at Engelberg. The quarterly financial report is available at the «PRO MATA ATLÂNTICA»: pro_mata_atlantica@gmx.ch.

The Swiss technical consultants (Barbara Suter & Richard Bolli) obtained their visa on February 4th. They arrived at Una on March 23rd and took on work on 2nd April.

14/24 Total number of farmers involved and active **this/** last quarter; **x** = varying number; **i** = inactive

	Working Plan	Realized Activities ✓ = milestones reached	Comments / Measures to take in the following quarter
Capacity Building with a focus on organic farming x/04	Course in organic agriculture with excursion to a neighboring model farm for all members of the association, with evaluation of this event.	20 smallholders participated in this course on 28 January and were impressed about the diversity of this farm and about the viability of the methods of organic farming. The Queimada farmers expressed their wish to try out an organic fertilizer. ✓	Some degree of understanding of organic agriculture might have happened on this day, however, the farmers continue stating that their soils are very poor and would not produce without heavy fertilizers. Model farms in the Queimada Grande area could help providing proof of the viability of organic methods, yet, such farms are inexistent.
	2 field days per month, organized by the coordinator and the smallholders' association.	No field day took place.	Field days – which were suggested by smallholders themselves – need to be re-evaluated. The technical assistance team, complete from 2 nd of April, will launch a new initiative in order to take up or modify this concept.
Organic Farming i/i 05/03	Taking up composting on smallholders' farms with a good number of farmers.	No compost was produced in the reporting period.	If farmers continue ignoring the methods of organic farming without having them tried out or participated in the training activities offered, the ErvaUna project may come to the conclusion (which is in contradiction to farmers' declarations made during the precursor project), that in reality the Queimada Grande farmers do not wish such a project. ErvaUna could then try to expand to other farmers' groups, or terminate the project.
	Broad-scale composting within the Banana-da-Terra Project (Extension program). New Jack Beans initiative: granting smallholders a fixed price: ErvaUna will buy the seeds for extending bean production in the further course of the project.	No compost was produced in the reporting period. 5 farmers have continued cultivating Jack Beans. Additionally, 4 farmers declared their interest in the new Jack Bean initiative, however, no new plantations were not yet made. There is no significant seed production in sight.	
Diversification 03/04	9 farmers are assisted in planting kitchen gardens.	1 farmer has continued his experimental kitchen garden. One farmer, Dona Judith, has doubled her production, further diversified their vegetables and is very active on the local market.	With these 3 good examples at hand, the ErvaUna technical assistance team will try to expand the concept of diversifying into legumes. Beyond contributing to healthy food for the families, legumes will be sold at the local market. Assistance will be given both in the field and in marketing.
	The already existing mixed crops of legumes / banana (Ext. progr.) will be monitored.	1 farmer has obtained good vegetable yields in his banana plantation and sells with success on the local market. (✓)	
Agroforestry i/i	Overall monitoring of the development of the 4000 saplings of fruit trees, and fertilizing with compost where necessary.	The overall monitoring of the agroforestry plantings with 12 farmers has not been performed yet. One farmer has planted rainforest trees.	The prospect of agroforestry needs to be re-evaluated. The majority of smallholders seems to have a very vague perception of long-term cultures, even in this area where (cocoa-)agroforestry has its historical roots.
Extension Programs 10/20	Chicken Breeding: Analyzing costs of fodder and animal health against production. (5/5)	5 farmers have continued their chicken breeding. Egg production is very low. The situation waits for analysis. 1 farmer attended a 2-day course with the intention of reviving this program.	Keeping in mind that these extension programs were suggested by the smallholders' association, the participation of farmers is very poor. Two programs remain without advancement or result after 9 months. ErvaUna has fostered all 4 programs through its coordinator (the fifth program, production of freshwater fish, was cancelled) and financed all but the chicken breeding program. ErvaUna will focus on the Banana Project in order to secure production and yield of the bananas as well as prepare these fields for future crops through the planting of shade trees, esp. the leguminous species <i>Glyricidia sepium</i> . The Piçava Project will be extended.
	Women's Jam Project: second test production (0/9)	No activity.	
	Banana Project: Composting and intercropping Jack Beans. Planting trees (4/4)	The legumes intercropped at 2 of 4 banana fields grow well. Neither composting was done nor Jack Beans planted, and in 2 fields soil cover is insufficient.	
	Piçava Palm Fiber Project: Preparation of seedlings, define the recuperation areas with 9 interested farmers (2/9)	Piçava Project: 850 nuts were prepared for germination by two farmers and the project coordinator. 630 seedlings were planted at one farm, with the first palms germinating now. The areas of formerly interested farmers have not been designated yet. Presently, 2 additional farmers (out of 12 in 2006) show an interest in planting piçava.	