

ervaUna Quarterly Report 2007-2

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

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

Resumo

Com a chegada dos consultores suíços (Barbara Suter & Richard Bolli) começava a fase 1 do projeto ervaUna (2007-2009) no dia 2º de Abril. A re-avaliação dos sítios na Queimada Grande mostrava que quase não tem interesse nenhum no projeto ervaUna. As atividades e a participação continuam sendo mínimo. Só estão ativos 6 produtores. 0 até 4 deles participaram em 5 cursos de campo que foram oferecidos e organizados pela equipe do projeto junto com dois produtores. Foram plantadas leguminosas em 4 sítios, realizados 3 compostos, e numa fazenda foi construída uma leira experimental com terraçamento. A Associação dos Pequenos Produtores da Queimada Grande não tem interesse no campo comunitário que foi oferecido por ervaUna para realizar novos cultivos orgânicos. No dia da inauguração (com curso como preparar mudas de piaçava) ninguém apareceu. A única pessoa na Queimada Grande que até 3 anos está compartilhando a visão de juntar as forças na associação para melhorar as vidas das famílias rurais é o presidente da associação, Senhor Lau, o que fica gravemente doente. São poucas as perspectivas para a agricultura orgânica na região. Será discutido na ONG Vereinigung PRO MATA ATLÂNTICA (PMA) e com os doadores se o projeto ervaUna possa continuar com um novo plano de trabalho: Pensamos em realizar os métodos da agricultura orgânica e a diversificação na Fazenda Boa Vista (que foi adquirida pela PMA) como «fazenda modelo» para a região.

Zusammenfassung

Am 2. April haben sich die Schweizer Projektleiter dem lokalen Koordinator angeschlossen und ihre Arbeit in Una aufgenommen. Die Aktivitäten der Kleinbauern im Rahmen des ervaUna Projektes und in den von ihnen selbst vorgeschlagenen und durchgeführten Unterprojekten sind fast zum Erliegen gekommen; die Wiederbelebung war im Berichtsquartal bescheiden. Aktiv sind 6 Bauern. An 5 angebotenen Feldkursen nahmen jeweils 0 bis 4 von ihnen teil. Auf 4 Farmen wurden unter Anleitung und Mitarbeit der Projekt Equipe Leguminosensaatn eingebracht, auf 3 Farmen kompostiert und auf einer Farm ein dauerhaftes Terrassenbeet errichtet. Die Assoziation Queimada Grande interessiert sich nicht für dieses Projekt: wir offerierten ein Gemeinschaftsland von 10 ha, doch am Eröffnungstag mit Palmsetzlingskurs erschien niemand. Die einzige Person in der Queimada Grande, welche die Vision des Projektes seit 3 Jahren mitträgt, ist der heute schwer erkrankte Präsident der Assoziation, Senhor Lau. Es gibt (auch in der weiteren Region) derzeit keine breite Akzeptanz für biologischen Landbau.

Die Vereinigung PRO MATA ATLÂNTICA konnte die Fazenda Boa Vista erwerben, die gemäss Projektplan als Gemeinschaftsland (später als Landwirtschaftsschule) dienen sollte. Aktuell als Modellfarm und Versuchstation ausgelegt, versucht die Projektleitung jetzt Ergebnisse mit Komposten und Mischkulturen zu erbringen. Die Arbeiten auf den Versuchsfeldern schreiten voran, und Baumpflanzungen zur Umwandlung von Weideflächen sind in Planung. Gleichzeitig werden die wenigen aktiven Bauern betreut als auch der Kontakt zu neuen, wirklich interessierten Familien und Kooperativen gesucht. Über die Möglichkeiten einer Projektfortführung unter den gegebenen Umständen wird im Juli mit der Vereinigung PRO MATA ATLÂNTICA und den Geldgebern diskutiert.

News

The Swiss technical consultants joined the local project coordinator (who guided the 24-month precursor project) and took on work on 2nd April. Re-assessments at the smallholder families' farms provide a clear picture of the situation in the Queimada Grande area: There is no interest in the ervaUna project. Senhor Lau, president of the smallholders' association, has been the only person at Queimada Grande, who has nourished and supported the project's vision. Our bottom-up approach, i.e., developing new techniques of organic agriculture together with smallholders as proposed in the ervaUna working plan, will not be feasible within project phase 1 (2007-2009).

Thus, the project's working plan need to be revised. The Swiss NGO Vereinigung PRO MATA ATLÂNTICA could purchase the 10 ha Fazenda Boa Vista in the centre of the Queimada Grande. Formerly planned to be the community field of the smallholders' association, it could now serve as a «model farm» for organic farming, diversification, and reforestation. Boa Vista will be an experimental station, from which our achievements may spread. We are going to discuss the feasibility of this new approach with PRO MATA ATLÂNTICA and our donors in July. The budget, salaries included, was cut owing to the presently strong Brazilian currency in relation to the weak US Dollar.

We thank very much for the generous donation to the ervaUna project (CHF 550.-) made by the Maturaklasse 2009 at Stiftsschule Engelberg, Switzerland.

6/14 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
<p>Capacity Building</p> <p>with a focus on organic farming</p> <p>06/x</p>	<p>A. The ervaUna technical assistance team will try to revive field days or modify this concept.</p> <p>B. Model farms or model fields in the Queimada Grande area (at present inexistent) could give proof of the viability of organic methods and convince farmers of new agricultural methods.</p>	<p>A. Five field days / field courses were held. As a modification, all courses took place in the afternoon (to allow for rubber cutting in the morning), and three of them were led by knowledgeable and recognized smallholders. The result is very poor: 4/2/2/3/0 people participated.</p> <p>B. Three smallholders' «model fields» could be identified. We dispose of the 10ha Fazenda Boa Vista, «model farm» and presently core area of the project. ✓</p>	<p>We offered smallholders to manage the ervaUna «model farm» in co-operation with the ervaUna project to realise their own plantations and use this land as their community field, a "living classroom" situated in the centre of the Queimada Grande including free assistance for all. There, the methods of organic farming may be developed together with smallholders. Nobody appeared at the opening day.</p>
<p>Organic Farming</p> <p>01 ?/i</p>	<p>C. It will be evaluated whether or not the Queimada Grande farmers would wish a project focussed on organic farming.</p> <p>D. We search for options how to spread organic agriculture to other farmers' groups.</p>	<p>C. Only one farmer showed some interest in organic farming.</p> <p>D. Information provided by two rural cooperatives and extensive travelling of the technical assistance team proved the very bad perception of organic farming in the area. Presently, the number of organic farms in the 1300 km² Una area probably does not exceed 20 families.</p>	<p>The methods of organic farming are not welcome in the project area. Friendly ignorance, a lack of self-esteem, a general laissez-faire, an inappropriate, conservative treatment of the soil, and rural exodus predominate the smallholder families' agriculture. Many survive with a pension of one of their family and do not see any necessity for change.</p>
<p>Diversification</p> <p>03/05</p>	<p>E. Fostering diversification of smallholder farms into vegetables and fruit for self-sufficiency as well as for the local market.</p>	<p>E. Only three farmers cultivate a diversity of vegetables for their families. Other families did not take on suggestions made by the ervaUna local coordinator last year.</p>	<p>Vegetables are not commonly consumed in the area, and new agricultural products are not easily accepted by the local population.</p>
<p>Agroforestry</p> <p>01/03</p>	<p>F. The prospects of agroforestry need to be re-evaluated for the Queimada Grande area.</p>	<p>F. Agroforestry in the Queimada Grande area consists mainly of three crop trees, all planted in one layer: Rubber, the piaçava palm, and coconut. They contribute only very little to biodiversity.</p>	<p>Prospects of long-term plantations of trees are not present in the Queimada Grande. The traditional agroforestry system with cocoa under shade trees has widely been abandoned.</p>
<p>Extension Programs</p> <p>06/10</p>	<p>G. The Banana Project will be given assistance in order to secure the production and yield of the bananas as well as prepare these fields for future crops through the planting of shade trees and leguminous species.</p> <p>H. The Piaçava Palm Project will be extended.</p> <p>(The Chicken-Project continues with more farmers to participate, whereas the Women's Jam Project has been abandoned)</p>	<p>G. The bananas are growing well. Soil cover and the intercropping of trees could be realised in one plantation, intercropping with legumes in another, whereas in the third plantation correct treatment is presently missing. (4 farmers participate) ✓</p> <p>H. We tried to extend the Piaçava Palm Project by offering smallholders courses on how to produce palm seedlings. Whereas the first course was attended by two farmers, nobody appeared to the second course. 100 palm seedlings were prepared and planted at Boa Vista. (3 farmers participate) (✓)</p>	<p>The Banana Project will further be accompanied. Mulching and bean planting will help establish the bananas. A success of this smallholders' sub-project is realistic, provided the market opportunities in the nearby cities will carefully be observed.</p> <p>Germination of the seedlings planted in March (800 palms) is expected in July and will be monitored. The results will be communicated to all piaçava producers. An extension of this sub-project may possibly be achieved, however, up to date only 6 farmers declared some interest.</p>
<p>Summary and Conclusion</p>	<p>After completion of the 24-month precursor project (April 2005 – March 2007), smallholders today neither participate in the ervaUna activities nor in the sub-projects managed by their own. Within the ervaUna project phase 1 (2007-2009), the objective of developing organic farming (or any other new agricultural method) together with smallholders is unrealistic. As a consequence, our working plan needs to be revised.</p> <p>We suggest that organic farming, diversification, and planting of rainforest trees should be realized at Fazenda Boa Vista. Through providing an example of successful model plantations, new farmers might become interested and active. The results achieved at Boa Vista will locally be spread, and published. Capacity building should be continued with both the few active and new smallholders, and contacts to other regionally operating agrocooperatives established.</p>		