

ervaUna Quarterly Report 2007-4

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

Nesse trimestre foram produzidos e apresentados os primeiros resultados na «fazenda modelo» Boa Vista. Com 15 compostos adubamos 18 leiras experimentais, que resultou numa considerável melhora do solo. Depois de pre-culturas com feijão-de-porco e amendoim, as hortaliças plantadas em seguida estão em produção. Foi organizado o segundo curso de campo sobre a melhora do solo no dia 4 de Dezembro, com 18 pessoas que participaram. Nem por isso somente 2 delas têm relação e filiação autêntica para a vida rural e futuro na agricultura.

Incluindo a fase pre-projeto (2005-2007), o projeto ervaUna quase está completando três anos. Com a completa falta de participação dos pequenos produtores da Queimada Grande, e sem respostas aos contatos estabelecidos com outras organizações e associações na região, temos que aceitar que não há interesse nesse projeto. A equipe técnica nem conseguiu comunicar aos produtores que o projeto foi deles, nem construir uma nova base local. Em virtude da falta de resultados, os financeiros principais suspenderam os pagamentos no percurso do ano 2007. A coordenadora local, Linde Nobre, saiu do projeto em 21/09/2007. Os consultores técnicos, Barbara Suter e Richard Bolli, apresentaram o seu pedido de demissão para a PRO MATA ATLÂNTICA (PMA). Com resolução do 07/01/2008 o conselho de gerência da PMA cancelou o patrocínio e subsídio para ervaUna. Como consequência, o projeto ervaUna vai terminar pelo fim de Fevereiro 2008. Folhetos informativos sobre as técnicas e culturas desenvolvidas na Fazenda Boa Vista vão ser publicados na website do projeto: www.ervauna.ch.

Zusammenfassung

Nach 2 Jahren Vorprojekt (2005 bis 2007) und drei Quartalen Hauptprojekt (April bis Dezember 2007) steht das Biolandbau-Projekt ervaUna vor dem Abschluss des 3. Projektjahres. Die Kleinbauern der Queimada Grande interessieren sich weder für Zusammenarbeit, noch für Kurse noch für die ersten Resultate auf der Modellfarm. Die gesetzten Zwischenziele wurden deshalb verfehlt. In Una und umliegenden Gebieten im Süden Bahias sehen wir keine Entwicklungsmöglichkeit für ein Biolandbau-Projekt mit lokaler Initiative und Trägerschaft (Analyse siehe Seite 2). Barbara Suter und Richard Bolli haben deshalb per 29.2.2008 ihren Rücktritt als Projektleiter eingereicht. Das Biolandbau-Projekt ervaUna endet Ende Februar 2008.

Auch in diesem Quartal ist es nicht gelungen, das Projekt ervaUna auf eine lokale Basis zu stellen. Am 4. Dezember nahmen 18 Personen am erfolgreichen 2. Kurs zur Bodenverbesserung auf der Modellfarm Boa Vista teil. Aber nur 2 der Teilnehmer richten ihre Zukunft auf die Landwirtschaft aus. Zu drei Bauerngemeinschaften in Una ist der Kontakt hergestellt. Zwei ihrer Präsidenten haben die Modellfazenda besucht, weitergehende Kontakte blieben bislang aus. Der NGO FlorestaViva (80 km nördlich von Una tätig) haben wir Mitfinanzierung und Mit- oder Zusammenarbeit in ihrem Medizinalpflanzenprojekt angeboten und Einblick in deren Entwicklungsarbeit erhalten. Weiterführende Korrespondenz bleibt seit 2 Monaten unbeantwortet. Die Bemühungen des lokalen Projektkoordinators, in der Queimada Grande einen Schulgarten einzurichten, sind nach der Säuberung des Geländes pünktlich zu Ferienbeginn eingeschlafen.

Die Modellfarm Fazenda Boa Vista bringt Resultate. 15 Komposte sind auf den Versuchsfeldern ausgebracht und tragen zur Bodenverbesserung sowie zur Düngung der Pflanzen bei. Die den Leguminosen-Vorkulturen nachfolgenden Gemüseplantungen gedeihen, Bäume für neue Agroforstsysteme sind gepflanzt. Merkblätter zu einzelnen Kulturen und Techniken der Bodenverbesserung sind in Arbeit und werden im Frühjahr 2008 auf der website www.ervauna.ch publiziert. Schlussbericht und Bilanz von Vor- und Hauptprojekt (2005 bis 2008) sind im März verfügbar.

The end of the ervaUna project

After two years running the precursor project (2005-2007) with ongoing technical assistance provided by the local coordinator and financing three subprojects (chosen and managed by smallholders), and 9 months starting up the main project, though offering courses and field days, and presenting first result at the model farm «Fazenda Boa Vista», participation of smallholders has declined to zero. The technical assistance team has not been able to make smallholders understand that the ervaUna project was meant to be theirs. We have to accept that the Queimada Grande farmers do not wish such a project. What we understand they probably would wish is: Yields and cash. ErvaUna was defined as a grass-roots project built on participation, and only a community-based project will further be financed by our donors. Not having achieved a fundament in the community, the project has, unfortunately, to be terminated.

Summary and Analysis: Project Activities Year 3, January to December 2007

24/ 14/ 0 Number of farmers involved and active 2005 / in January 2007 / in December 2007

	Working Plan	Realized Activities, Results	Comments and Analysis
Capacity Building with a focus on organic farming	<p>A. Practical courses and an excursion to a successfully run organic farm will be organized.</p> <p>B. The technical assistance team will jointly work and teach with farmers on their own farms.</p> <p>C. Smallholders are offered the model farm Boa Vista as their community field where they may realize their/or new plantations.</p>	<p>A. Courses on composting were held in 2005 by the local coordinator. From 2006 until April 2007 no field day took place. Farmers approved of the insight into the organic farm, yet argued their soils weren't suited for organic farming.</p> <p>B. Field work at smallholders' farms was offered and done from 4/2005 to 6/2007.</p> <p>C. Nobody appeared at the opening day of Fazenda Boa Vista, 20.6.2007.</p>	<p>Participation in capacity building events did rarely exceed 10 people and drastically dropped during 2006 and 2007. By their absence, the Queimada Grande farmers clearly demonstrated that they did not wish such a project. It was never theirs despite the ongoing commitment of the associations president and the project contract which was signed.</p>
Organic Farming 3/ 5/ 0	<p>D. The ervaUna project will promote the methods of organic farming through courses for composting, mulching and legume planting. Experimental fields at the model farm Fazenda Boa Vista will demonstrate the viability of organic methods for successful improvement of soil fertility.</p>	<p>D. 18 composts and 18 experimental fields with leguminous pre-cultures and vegetables have been prepared at Fazenda Boa Vista. Results were presented on courses (with hardly any participants) and two field days. Although field days were a success, only very few participants had a real connection to agriculture and may adopt the new methods.</p>	<p>Organic farming is not welcomed in the project area. Friendly ignorance, a general laissez-faire together with a conservative and inappropriate treatment of the soil predominate the smallholders' agriculture. Many survive with a pension of one of their family. They neither see a necessity for change nor want to invest in labour-intensive organic farming.</p>
Diversification and Agroforestry 12/ 3/ 0	<p>E. Diversification into a variety of legumes (kitchen gardens; in order to provide families with healthy food and produce quick results) and the planting of fruit trees (to provide new areas of agroforestry) were planned on every holding.</p>	<p>E. Smallholders' kitchen gardens, mentored by the coordinator, started with 9 families and ended with some poor tomato and cointro plants. Fruit trees were planted at 12 holdings. The trees were donated by the local field station Esmai, never monitored, and many of them did not survive.</p>	<p>Prospects of diversification (be it in horticulture or agroforestry) are not present in the Queimada Grande area. The majority of families do not regularly eat vegetables. Farmers have a very vague perception of agroforestry. They are in search of cash-crops with immediate return.</p>
Smallholders' Programs 20/ 5/ 2	<p>F. Three programs, suggested and set up by smallholders from July 2006, shall revive activity and co-operation in the area and contribute to capacity building of smallholder families. The women's Jam project and the Banana and Piaçava Palm programs have been managed by the local project coordinator Fabio Nobre and his wife Linde.</p>	<p>F. The Jam project (9 women) failed after inappropriate bottling and because farmers were not able to provide fruit from their own properties. The Banana project continues with 2 farmers (of 4), however with an expected yield 75% below plan. The Piaçava Palm project (2 farmers) has not promoted further activities than planting the seeds and waiting for germination, which is very low.</p>	<p>The failure of these programs has mainly two reasons: Farmers did not really want these programs; they were driven by the coordinators to participate in order to produce results during the precursor project, which were necessary for the successful fund-raising. The Jam and Banana programs were unprofessionally managed, jam and more than 50% of the bananas lost.</p>
Finding a new local basis for the project	<p>G. We look for farmers' groups and institutions in and outside the Una area with an interest in diversified agriculture in order to re-establish a local basis for the ervaUna project.</p>	<p>G. Contacts to three agrocooperatives and one NGO could be established. None of them answered our offers so far. The project coordinator did not want to re-visit and invite once more the 60 (so far passive) families of the Queimada Grande area he contacted during the year 2006.</p>	<p>Neither the personal contacts of our local coordinator (who has spoken to and worked with the people of the area for 2 years) nor invitations to the presidents of local communities led to a convincing participation of smallholders. «Ignorance is the explanation», a young local said.</p>
Summary and Conclusion: The ervaUna Project will be terminated at the end of February	<p>1) The ervaUna project is not feasible. A participatory approach does not work in this area. Among the reasons we consider most important the absence of both true leaders and cooperation among farmers, and the wide social disparity between those who provide knowledge (usually the rich) and those who receive it (the poor). Smallholders strongly perceive this disparity. It is probably one of the major constraints on co-operation. Our contacts to regionally operating agro-cooperatives and NGOs did not result in a new local basis for the project.</p> <p>2) Going ahead with a model farm does not work. Una is the wrong place for a lighthouse, because there are almost no young people left who would wish to stay and work in the rural zone. In fact, it is very hard to make a living in agriculture. Rural life and work have the meaning of «belonging to the poor». As the project has never presented «the solution», nobody has taken an interest in the findings of the ervaUna model farm. The remaining old farmers often «know better» and do not wish to give new methods a try. They don't make a first step because they find it strengthening, a risk, or too small for a change to the better.</p> <p>3) Diversification into medicinal plants is out of reach, because in Southern Bahia perception and production of quality do not make part of smallholders' lives.</p> <p>4) Donors do not support a (different) project without the participatory approach.</p> <p>After 8 months of operation, the model farm «Fazenda Boa Vista» is providing an example of successful initial soil improvement and diversification. The results will be published at www.ervauna.ch.</p>		